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TALES AND SKETCHES.

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TALES AND SKETCHES,

ILLUSTRATING THE

CHARACTER, USAGES, TRADITIONS,

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

BY WILLIAM CARLETON,

Author of "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry,"
"Fardorougha, the Miser," "Jane Sinclair,"
"Valentine M'Clutchy," &c.

DUBLIN:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES DUFFY,

23, ANGLESEA-STREET.

1845.

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William Holden, Printer, 10, Abbey-street, Dublin.

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TO

CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY, ESQ.

Editor of the "Nation" Newspaper.

My dear Duffy,

I know no man who, within the short period of his public life, has done so much to elevate the national mind, purify its taste, and diffuse a healthy intellectual movement among the Irish people; a movement which will do more to foster principles of independence and liberty, and give them permanency among us and our posterity, than any other cause with which I am acquainted. In order to mark my sense, then, of the public benefits you have thus conferred, and are conferring, upon our countrymen, and also, as a very inadequate token of long private friendship and sincere regard, I beg to prefix your name to the following volume.

Believe me to be, my dear Duffy,

Very sincerely and faithfully yours,

W. CARLETON.

Dublin, June 16th, 1845.

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PREFACE.

THE following volume contains a collection of short sketches, that have appeared in various periodicals within the last few years; and as many of them exhibit delineations of several remarkable characters that are strictly national, and consequently not to be found in any other country, at least with the same traits of habit, thought, and feeling, which distinguish them in this, the author was induced to bring them together as a series of those portraits in which the individual always represents not a person but a class. He had, however, still a stronger motive in reference to this, one which, he trusts, will plead his apology, at least with Irishmen. The present state of society is admitted to be, so far as regards the lower classes in Ireland, a transition one. Ignorance, want of education, and other causes, necessarily produced not only characters of a marked and peculiar kind, but also furnished the broad social stages on which they acted. These creations, then, cannot be uninteresting to any mind that takes pleasure in the investigation

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of those peculiar states of society which throw up their exponents to the surface of life. This, at any time, is a subject of deep interest to the moral physiologist, or to him who would solve the social idiosyncrasies of a past period, by that truthful analysis which takes the *effect* as the surest guide to the *cause*.

Many of the characters contained in the following volume have already ceased to exist, and are, consequently, the property of history. Others are still in being; but ere long they, too, will have disappeared, and may probably be sought for in vain, save in the unassuming pages of the following volume. Nay, in connexion with this particular subject, there is, probably, something unparalleled in the annals of literature; for the author has reason to think that several of the originals, who sat for their portraits here presented, were the last of their class which the country will ever again produce—a fact calculated of itself to occasion an interest which a mere perusal of them could not give. In every instance the characters have been drawn from actual life; and, indeed, some of them, yet alive, have borne testimony to the fidelity of their likeness, as represented in the sketches where they first appeared. Nay, the very names, as well of the individuals as of the places, and the scenery described, are, with scarcely an exception, real.

As to the literary merit of these sketches, the author feels that he must claim a large share of indulgence. Most of them were the production of a single day; but he is perfectly aware that he has no

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right whatsoever to urge this as an argument for disarming criticism: still it is a fact which many readers may be anxious to know. Unpretending as they are, in a literary point of view, they will be found, however, to present to the reader a body of IRISH SOCIAL ANTIQUITIES, which, he trusts, will, at all events, in some degree, repay a perusal.

Such as they are, he now respectfully presents them to the reader, with a hope that he will find in them some amusement, some knowledge that will be new to him, even as an Irishman, and occasional glimpses of that fire-side enjoyment and simplicity of country life, which, perhaps, after all, ampler knowledge may remove without putting any thing so well calculated to charm the untutored heart in their stead.

Dublin, June 16, 1845.

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TALES AND STORIES

OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

MICKEY M'ROREY,

THE IRISH FIDDLER.

WHAT a host of light-hearted associations are revived by that living fountain of fun and frolic, an Irish fiddler! Every thing connected with him is agreeable, pleasant, jolly. All his anecdotes, songs, jokes, stories, and secrets, bring us back from the pressure and cares of life, to those happy days and nights when the heart was as light as the heel, and both beat time to the exhilarating sound of his fiddle.

The harper is a character looked upon by the Irish rather as a musical curiosity, than a being specially created to contribute to their enjoyment. There is something about him which they do not feel to be in perfect sympathy with their habits and amusements. He is above them, not of them; and although they respect him, and treat him kindly, yet he is never received among them with that spontaneous ebullition of warmth and cordiality with which they welcome their own musician, the fiddler. The harper, in fact, belongs, or, rather, did belong, to the gentry, and to the gentry they are willing to leave him. They listen to his music when he feels disposed to play for them, but it only gratifies their curiosity, instead of enlivening their hearts—a fact sufficiently evident from the

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circumstance of their seldom attempting to dance to it. This preference, however, of the fiddle to the harp, is a feeling generated by change of times and circumstances, for it is well known that in days gone by, when Irish habits were purer, older, and more hereditary than they are now, the harp was the favourite instrument of young and old, of high and low.

The only instrument that can be said to rival the fiddle is the bagpipe; but every person knows that Ireland is a loving country, and that at our fairs, dances, weddings, and other places of amusement, Paddy and his sweetheart are in the habit of indulging in a certain quiet and affectionate kind of whisper, the creamy tones of which are sadly curdled by the sharp jar of the chanter. It is not, in fact, an instrument adapted for love-making. The drone is an enemy to sentiment, and it is an unpleasant thing for a pretty blushing girl to find herself put to the necessity of bawling out her consent at the top of her lungs, which she must do, or have the ecstatic words lost in its drowsy and monotonous murmur. The bagpipe might do for war, to which, with a slight variation, it has been applied; but in our opinion it is only fit to be danced to by an assembly of people who are hard of hearing. Indeed, we have little doubt but its cultivation might be introduced with good effect as a system of medical treatment, suitable to the pupils of a deaf and dumb institution; for if anything could bring them to the use of their ears, its sharp and stiletto notes surely would effect that object.

The fiddle, however, is the instrument of all others most essential to the enjoyment of an Irishman. Dancing and love are very closely connected, and of course the fiddle is never thought of or heard, without awakening the tenderest and most agreeable emotions. Its music, soft, sweet, and cheerful, is just the thing for Paddy, who, under its influence, partakes of its spirit, and becomes soft, sweet, and cheerful himself. The very tones of it act like a charm upon him, and produce in his head

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such a bland and delightful intoxication, that he finds himself making love just as naturally as he would eat his meals. It opens all the sluices of his heart, puts mercury in his veins, gives honey to a tongue that was, heaven knows, sufficiently sweet without it, and gifts him with a pair of feather heels that Mercury might envy; and to crown all, endows him, while pleading his cause in a quiet corner, with a fertility of invention, and an easy unembarrassed assurance, which nothing can surpass. In fact, with great respect for my friend Mr. Bunting, the fiddle it is that *ought* to be our national instrument, as it is that which is most closely and agreeably associated with the best and happiest impulses of the Irish heart. The very language of the people themselves is a proof of this; for whilst neither harp nor bagpipe is ever introduced as illustrating peculiarities of feeling by any reference to their influence, the fiddle is an agreeable instrument in their hands, in more senses than one. Paddy's highest notion of flattery towards the other sex is boldly expressed by an image drawn from it, for when he boasts that he can, by honied words, impress such an agreeable delusion upon his sweetheart as to make her imagine "that there is a fiddler on every rib of the house," there can be no metaphor conceived more strongly or beautifully expressive of the charm which flows from the tones of that sweet instrument. Paddy, however, is very often hit by his own metaphor, at a time when he least expects it. When pleading his cause, for instance, and promising golden days to his fair one, he is not unfrequently met by, "Ay, ay, it's all very well now; you're sugary enough, of coorse; but wait 'till we'd be a year married, an' maybe, like so many others that promised what you do, you'd never come home to me widout 'hangin' up your fiddle behind the door;'" by which she means to charge him with the probability of being agreeable when abroad, but morose in his own family.

Having thus shown that the fiddle and its music are mixed up so strongly with our language, feelings, and amusements, it

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is now time to say something of the fiddler. In Ireland it is impossible, on looking through all the classes of society, to find any individual so perfectly free from care, or, in stronger words, so completely happy, as the fiddler, especially if he be blind, which he generally is. His want of sight circumscribes his other wants, and, whilst it diminishes his enjoyments, not only renders him unconscious of their loss, but gives a greater zest to those that are left him, simple and innocent as they are. He is in truth a man whose lot in life is happily cast, and whose lines have fallen in pleasant places. The phase of life which is presented to him, and in which he moves, is one of innocent mirth and harmless enjoyment. Marriages, weddings, dances, and merry-makings of all descriptions, create the atmosphere of mirth and happiness which he ever breathes. With the dark designs, the crimes, and outrages of mankind, he has nothing to do, and his light spirit is never depressed by their influence. Indeed, he may be said with truth to pass through none but the festivals of life, to hear nothing but mirth, to feel nothing but kindness, and to communicate nothing but happiness to all around him. He is at once the source and the centre of all good and friendly feelings. By him the aged man forgets his years, and is agreeably cheated back into youth; the labourer snatches a pleasant moment from his toil, and is happy; the care-worn ceases to remember the anxieties that press him down; the boy is enraptured with delight, and the child is charmed with a pleasure that he feels to be wonderful.

Surely such a man is important, as filling up with enjoyment so many of the pauses in human misery. He is a thousand times better than a politician, and is a true philosopher without knowing it. Every man is his friend, unless it be a rival fiddler, and he is the friend of every man, with the same exception. Every house, too, every heart, and every hand, is open to him; he never knows what it is to want a bed, a dinner, or a shilling. Good heavens! what more than this can the

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cravings of a human heart desire! For my part, I do not know what others might aim at; but I am of opinion that in such a world as this, the highest proof of a wise man, would be, a wish to live and die an Irish fiddler.

And yet, alas! there is no condition of life without some remote or contingent sorrow. Many a scene have I witnessed connected with this very subject, that would wring the tears out of any eye, and find a tender pulse in the hardest heart. It is indeed a melancholy alternative that devotes the poor sightless lad to an employment that is ultimately productive of so much happiness to himself and others. This alternative is seldom resorted to, unless when some poor child,—perhaps a favorite —is deprived of sight by the terrible ravages of the small-pox. In life there is scarcely any thing more touching than to witness in the innocent invalid the first effects, both upon himself and his parents, of this woeful privation. The utter helplessness of the pitiable darkling, and his total dependence upon those around him—his unacquaintance with the relative situation of all the places that were familiar to him—his tottering and timid step, and his affecting call of "Mammy, where are you?" joined to the bitter consciousness on her part that the light of affection and innocence will never sparkle in those beloved eyes again—all this constitutes a scene of deep and bitter sorrow. When, however, the sense of his bereavement passes away, and the cherished child grows up to the proper age, a fiddle is procured for him by his parents, if they are able, and if not, a subscription is made up among their friends and neighbours to buy him one. All the family, with tears in their eyes, then kiss and take leave of him; and his mother, taking him by the hand, leads him, as had been previously arranged, to the best fiddler in the neighbourhood, with whom he is left as an apprentice. There is generally no fee required, but he is engaged to hand his master all the money he can make at dances, from the time he is proficient enough to play at them. Such is the

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simple process of putting a blind boy in the way of becoming acquainted with the science of melody.

In my native parish there were four or five fiddlers—all good in their way; but the Paganini of the district was the far-famed Mickey M'Rorey. Where Mickey properly lived, I never could actually discover, and for the best reason in the world—he was not at home once in twelve months. As Colley Cibber says in the play, he was "a kind of a here-and-thereian—a stranger nowhere." This, however, mattered little; for though perpetually shifting day after day from place to place, yet it somehow happened that nobody ever was at a loss where to find him. The truth is, he never felt disposed to travel *incog*, because he knew that his interest must suffer by doing so; the consequence was, that wherever he went, a little nucleus of local fame always attended him, which rendered it an easy matter to find his whereabouts.

Mickey was blind from his infancy, and, as usual, owed to the small-pox the loss of his eye-sight. He was about the middle size, of rather a slender make, and possessed an intelligent countenance, on which beamed that singular expression of inward serenity so peculiar to the blind. His temper was sweet and even, but capable of rising through the buoyancy of his own humour to a high pitch of exhilaration and enjoyment. The dress he wore, as far as I can remember, was always the same in colour and fabric—to wit, a brown coat, a sober-tinted cotton waistcoat, grey stockings, and black corduroys. Poor Mickey! I think I see him before me; his head erect, as the heads of all blind men are, the fiddle-case under his left arm, and his hazel staff held out like a feeler, exploring with experimental pokes the nature of the ground before him, even although some happy urchin leads him onward with an exulting eye; an honour of which he will boast to his companions for many a mortal month to come.

The first time I ever heard Mickey play was also the first I

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ever heard a fiddle. Well and distinctly do I remember the occasion. The season was summer—but summer *was* summer then—and a new house belonging to Frank Thomas had been finished, and was just ready to receive him and his family. The floors of Irish houses in the country generally consist at first of wet clay; and when this is sufficiently well smoothed and hardened, a dance is known to be an excellent thing to bind and prevent them from cracking. On this occasion the evening had been appointed, and the day was nearly half advanced, but no appearance of the fiddler. The state of excitement in which I found myself could not be described. The name of Mickey M'Rorey had been ringing in my ears for God knows how long, but I had never seen him, or even heard his fiddle. Every two minutes I was on the top of a little eminence looking out for him, my eyes straining out of their sockets, and my head dizzy with the prophetic expectation of rapture and delight. Human patience, however, could bear this painful suspense no longer, and I privately resolved to find Mickey, or perish. I accordingly proceeded across the hills, a distance of about three miles, to a place called Kilnahushogue, where I found him waiting for a guide. At this time I could not have been more than seven years of age; and how I wrought out my way over the lonely hills, or through what mysterious instinct I was led to him, and that by a path, too, over which I had never travelled before, must be left unrevealed, until it shall please that Power which guides the bee to its home, and the bird for thousands of miles through the air, to disclose the principle upon which it is accomplished.

On our return home I could see the young persons of both sexes flying out to the little eminence I spoke of, looking eagerly towards the spot we travelled from, and immediately scampering in again, clapping their hands and shouting with delight. Instantly the whole village was out, young and old, standing for a moment to satisfy themselves that the in-

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telligence was correct; after which, about a dozen of the youngsters sprang forward, with the speed of so many antelopes, to meet us, whilst the elders returned with a soberer, but not less satisfied, manner into the houses. Then commenced the usual battle, as to who should be honoured by permission to carry the fiddle-case. Oh! that fiddle-case! For seven long years it was an honour exclusively allowed to myself, whenever Mickey attended a dance anywhere at all near us; and never was the Lord Chancellor's mace—to which, by the way, with great respect for his Lordship, it bore a considerable resemblance—carried with a prouder heart or a more exulting eye. But so it is—

"These little things are great to *little men*."

"Blood alive, Mickey, you're welcome!" "How is every bone of you, Mickey? Bedad we gev you up." "No, we didn't give you up, Mickey; never heed him; sure we knew very well you'd not desart the Towny boys—whoo!—Fol de rol lol!" "Ah, Mickey, won't you sing 'There was a wee devil came over the wall?'" "To be sure he will, but wait till he comes home and gets his dinner first. Is it off an empty stomach you'd have him to sing?" "Mickey, give me the fiddle-case, won't you, Mickey?" "No, to *me*, Mickey." "Never heed them, Mickey: you promised it to me at the dance in Carntaul."

"Aisy, boys, aisy. The truth is, none of yez can get the fiddle-case. Shibby, my fiddle, hasn't been well for the last day or two, and can't bear to be carried by any one barrin' myself."

"Blood alive! sick is it, Mickey?—an' what ails her?"

"Why, some o' the doctors says there's a frog in her, an' others that she has got the cholic; but I'm goin' to give her a dose of balgriffauns when I get up to the house above. Ould Harry Connolly says she's with-fiddle; an' if that's true, boys,

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maybe some o' yez won't be in luck. I'll be able to spare a young fiddle or two among yez."

Many a tiny hand was clapped, and many an eye was lit up with the hope of getting a young fiddle; for gospel itself was never looked upon to be more true than this assertion of Mickey's. And no wonder. The fact is, he used to amuse himself by making small fiddles of deal and horse-hair, which he carried about with him, as presents for such youngsters as he took a fancy to. This he made a serious business of, and carried it on with an importance becoming the intimation just given. Indeed, I remember the time when I watched one of them, which I was so happy as to receive from him, day and night, with the hope of being able to report that it was growing larger; for my firm belief was, that in due time it would reach the usual size.

As we went along, Mickey, with his usual tact, got out of us all the information respecting the several courtships of the neighbourhood that had reached us, and as much, too, of the village gossip and scandal as we knew.

Nothing can exceed the overflowing kindness and affection with which the Irish fiddler is received on the occasion of a dance or merry-making; and to do him justice he loses no opportunity of exaggerating his own importance. From habit, and his position among the people, his wit and power of repartee are necessarily cultivated and sharpened. Not one of his jokes ever fails—a circumstance which improves his humour mightily; for nothing on earth sustains it so much as knowing, that, whether good or bad it will be laughed at. Mickey, by the way, was a bachelor, and, though blind, was able, as he himself used to say, to see through his ears better than another could through the eyes. He knew every voice at once, and every boy and girl in the parish by name, the moment he heard them speak.

On reaching the house he is bound for, he either partakes

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of, or at least is offered, refreshment, after which comes the ecstatic moment to the youngsters: but all this is done by due and solemn preparation. First he calls for a pair of scissors, with which he pares or seems to pare his nails; then asks for a piece of rosin, and in an instant half a dozen boys are off at a break-neck pace, to the next shoe-maker's, to procure it; whilst in the mean time he deliberately pulls a piece out of his pocket and rosins his bow. But, heavens! what a ceremony the opening of that fiddle-case is! The manipulation of the blind man as he runs his hand down to the key-hole—the turning of the key—the taking out of the fiddle—the twang twang—and then the first ecstatic sound, as the bow is drawn across the strings; then comes a screwing; then a delicious saw or two; again another screwing—twang twang—and away he goes with the favourite tune of the good woman, for such is the etiquette upon these occasions. The house is immediately thronged with the neighbours, and a preliminary dance is taken, in which the old folks, with good-humoured violence, are literally dragged out, and forced to join. Then come the congratulations—"Ah, Jack, you could do it wanst,," says Mickey, "an' can still; you have a kick in you yet." "Why, Mickey, I seen dancin' in my time," the old man will reply, his brow relaxed by a remnant of his former pride, and the hilarity of the moment, "but you see the breath isn't what it used to be wid me, when I could dance the *Baltehorum Jig* on the bottom of a ten-gallon cask. But I think a glass o' whiskey will do us no harm after that. Heighho!—well, well—I'm sure I thought *my* dancin' days wor over."

"Bedad an' you wor matched any how," rejoined the fiddler. "Molshy carried as light a heel as ever you did; sorra a woman of her years ever I seen could cut the buckle wid her. You would know the tune on her feet still."

"Ah, Mickey, the truth is," the good woman would say, "we

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have no sich dancin' now as there was in my days. Thry that glass."

"But as good fiddlers, Molshy, eh? Here's to you both, and long may ye live to shake the toe! Whoo! be dad that's great stuff. Come now sit down, Jack, till I give you your ould favourite, '*Cannie Soogah.*'"

These were happy moments and happy times, which might well be looked upon as picturing the simple manners of country life with very little of moral shadow to obscure the cheerfulness which lit up the Irish heart and hearth into humble happiness. Mickey, with his usual good nature, never forgot the younger portion of his audience. After entertaining the old and full-grown, he would call for a key, one end of which he placed in his mouth, in order to make the fiddle sing for the children their favourite song, beginning with

"Oh! grand-mamma, will you squeeze my wig?"

This he did in such a manner, through the medium of the key, that the words seemed to be spoken by the instrument, and not by himself. After this was over, he would sing us, to his own accompaniment, another favourite, "There was a wee devil looked over the wall," which generally closed that portion of the entertainment, so kindly designed for *us*.

Upon those moments I have often witnessed marks of deep and pious feeling, occasioned by some memory of the absent or the dead, that were as beautiful as they were affecting. If, for instance, a favourite son or daughter happened to be removed by death, the father or mother, remembering the air which was loved best by the departed, would pause a moment, and with a voice full of sorrow, say, "Mickey, there is *one tune* that I would like to hear; I love to think of it, and to hear it; I do, for the sake of them that's gone—my darlin' son that's lyin' low: it was he that loved it. His ear is closed

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against it now; but for *his* sake—ay, for your sake, avourneen machree—we will hear it wanst more."

Mickey always played such tunes in his best style, and amidst a silence that was only broken by sobs, suppressed moanings, and the other tokens of profound sorrow. These gushes, however, of natural feeling soon passed away. In a few minutes the smiles returned, the mirth broke out again, and the lively dance went on as if their hearts had been incapable of such affection for the dead—affection at once so deep and tender. But many a time the light of cheerfulness plays along the stream of Irish feeling, when cherished sorrow lies removed from the human eye far down from the surface.

These preliminary amusements being now over, Mickey is conducted to the dance-house, where he is carefully installed in the best chair, and immediately the dancing commences. It is not my purpose to describe an Irish dance here, having done it more than once elsewhere. It is enough to say that Mickey is now in his glory; and proud may the young man be who fills the honourable post of his companion, and sits next him. He is a living store-house of intelligence, a travelling directory for the parish—the lover's text-book—the young woman's best companion; for where is the courtship going on of which he is not cognizant? where is there a marriage on the tapis, with the particulars of which he is not acquainted? He is an authority whom nobody would think of questioning. It is now, too, that he scatters his jokes about; and so correct and well trained is his ear, that he can frequently name the young man who dances, by the peculiarity of his step.

"Ah ha! Paddy Brien, you're there? Sure I'd know the sound of your smoothin'-irons any where. Is it thrue, Paddy, that you wor sint for down to Errigle Keerogue, to kill the clocks for Dan M'Mahon? But, nabuklish! Paddy, what'll you have?"

"Is that Grace Reilly on the flure? Faix, avourneen, you

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can do it; devil o' your likes I *see* any where. I'll lay Shibby to a penny trump that you could dance your own namesake—the *Caleen dhas dhun*, the bonny brown girl—upon a spider's cobweb, widout breakin' it. Don't be in a hurry, Grace dear, to tie the knot; *I'll* wait for you."

Several times in the course of the night a plate is brought round, and a collection made for the fiddler: this was the moment when Mickey used to let the jokes fly in every direction. The timid he shamed into liberality, the vain he praised, and the niggardly he assailed by open hardy satire; all managed, however, with such an under-current of good humour, that no one could take offence. No joke ever told better than that of the broken string. Whenever this happened at night, Mickey would call out to some soft fellow, "Blood alive, Ned Martin, will you bring me a candle? I've broken a string." The unthinking young man, forgetting that he was blind, would take the candle in a hurry, and fetch it to him.

"Faix, Ned, I knew you wor jist fit for't; houldin' a candle to a dark man! Isn't he a beauty, boys?—look at him, girls—as 'cute as a pancake."

It is unnecessary to say, that the mirth on such occasions was convulsive. Another similar joke was also played off by him against such as he knew to be ungenerous at the collection.

"Paddy Smith, I want a word wid you. I'm goin' across the counthry as far as Ned Donnelly's, and I want you to help me along the road, as the night is dark."

"To be sure, Mickey. I'll bring you over as snug as if you wor on a clane plate, man alive!"

"Thank you, Paddy; throth you've the dacency in you; an' kind father for you, Paddy. Maybe I'll do as much for you some other time."

Mickey never spoke of this until the trick was played off, after which, he published it to the whole parish; and Paddy of course was made a standing jest for being so silly as to

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think that night or day had any difference to a man who could not see.

Thus passed the life of Mickey M'Rorey, and thus pass the lives of most of his class, serenely and happily. As the sailor to his ship, the sportsman to his gun, so is the fiddler attached to his fiddle. His hopes and pleasures, though limited, are full. His heart is necessarily light, for he comes in contact with the best and brightest side of life and nature; and the consequence is, that their mild and mellow lights are reflected on and from himself. I am ignorant whether poor Mickey is dead or not; but I dare say he forgets the boy to whose young spirit he communicated so much delight, and who often danced with a buoyant and careless heart to the pleasant notes of his fiddle. Mickey M'Rorey, farewell! Whether living or dead, peace be with you. *

* Mickey, who is still living, remembers the writer of this well, and felt very much flattered on hearing the above notice of himself read.—W. C., 1845.

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BUCKRAM-BACK,

THE COUNTRY DANCING-MASTER.

In those racy old times, when the manners and usages of Irishmen were more simple and pastoral than they are at present, dancing was cultivated as one of the chief amusements of life, and the dancing-master looked upon as a person essentially necessary to the proper enjoyment of our national recreation. Of all the amusements peculiar to our population, dancing is by far the most important, although certainly much less so now than it has been, even within our own memory. In Ireland it may be considered as a very just indication of the spirit and character of the people; so much so, that it would be extremly difficult to find any test so significant of the Irish heart, and its varied impulses, as the dance, when contemplated in its most comprehensive spirit. In the first place, no people dance so well as the Irish, and for the best reason in the world, as we shall show. Dancing, every one must admit, although a most delightful amusement, is not a simple, nor distinct, nor primary one. On the contrary, it is merely little else than a happy and agreeable method of enjoying music; and its whole spirit and character must necessarily depend upon the power of the heart to *feel* the melody to which the limbs and body move. Every nation, therefore, remarkable for a susceptibility of music, is also remarkable for a love of dancing, unless religion or some other adequate obstacle, arising from an anomalous condition of society, interposes to prevent it. Music and dancing being in fact as dependant the one on the other as cause and effect, it requires little argument to prove that the Irish, who

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are so sensitively alive to the one, should in a very high degree excel at the other; and accordingly it is so.

Nobody, unless one who has seen and *also felt* it, can conceive the incredible, nay, the inexplicable exhilaration of the heart, which a dance communicates to the peasantry of Ireland. Indeed, it resembles not so much enthusiasm as inspiration. Let a stranger take his place among those who are assembled at a dance in the country, and mark the change which takes place in Paddy's whole temperament, physical and moral. He first rises up rather indolently, selects his own sweetheart, and assuming such a station on the floor as renders it necessary that both should "face the fiddler," he commences. On the dance then goes, quietly at the outset; gradually he begins to move more sprightly; by and bye the right hand is up, and a crack of the fingers is heard; in a minute afterwards both hands are up, and two cracks are heard, the hilarity and brightness of his eye all the time keeping pace with the growing enthusiasm that is coming over him, and which eye, by the way, is most lovingly fixed upon, or, we should rather say, *into*, that of his modest partner. From that partner he never receives an *open* gaze in return, but in lieu of this, an occasional glance, quick as thought, and brilliant as a meteor, seems to pour into him a delicious fury that is made up of love—sometimes a little of whiskey, kindness, pride of his activity, and a reckless force of momentary happiness that defies description. Now commences the dance in earnest. Up he bounds in a fling or a caper—crack go the fingers—cut and treble go the feet, heel and toe, right and left. Then he flings the right heel up to the ham, up again the left, the whole face in a furnace-heat of ecstatic delight.

"Whoo! whoo! your sowl! Move your elbow, Mickey, (this to the fiddler). Quicker, quicker, man alive, or you'll lose sight of me. Whoo! Judy, that's the girl; handle your

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feet, avourneen; that's it, acushla! stand to me! Hurroo for our side of the house!"

And thus does he proceed with a vigour, and an agility, and a truth of time, that are incredible, especially when we consider the whirlwind of enjoyment which he has to direct. The conduct of his partner, whose face is lit up into a modest blush, is evidently tinged with his enthusiasm—for who could resist it?—but it is exhibited with great natural grace, joined to a delicate vivacity that is equally gentle and animated, and in our opinion precisely what dancing in a female ought to be—a blending of healthful exercise and innocent enjoyment.

There are a considerable variety of dances in Ireland, from the simple "reel of two" up to the country-dance, all of which are mirthful. There are, however, others which are serious, and may be looked upon as the exponents of the pathetic spirit of our country. Of the latter, I fear, several are altogether lost; and I question whether there be many persons now alive in Ireland who know much about the *Horo Lheig*, which, from the word it begins with, must necessarily have been danced only on mournful occasions. It is only at wakes and funereal customs in those remote parts of the country where old usages are most pertinaciously clung to, that any elucidation of the *Horo Lheig* and others of our forgotten dances could be obtained. At present, I believe, the only serious one we have is the *cotillon*, or, as they term it in the country, the cut-a-long. I myself have witnessed, when very young, a dance which, like the hornpipe, was performed but by one man. This, however, was the only point in which they bore to each other any resemblance. The one I allude to must in my opinion have been of Druidic or Magian descent. It was not necessarily performed to music, and could not be danced without the emblematic aids of a stick and handkerchief. It was addressed to an individual passion, and was, unquestionably, one of those symbolic dances that were used in pagan

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rites; and had the late Henry O'Brien seen it, there is no doubt but he would have seized upon it as a felicitous illustration of his system.

Having now said all we have to say here about Irish dances, it is time we should say something about the Irish dancing-master; and be it observed, that we mean him of the old school, and not the poor degenerate creature of the present day, who, unless in some remote parts of the country, is scarcely worth description, and has little of the national character about him.

Like most persons of the itinerant professions, the old Irish dancing-master was generally a bachelor, having no fixed residence, but living from place to place within *his own walk*, beyond which he seldom or never went. The farmers were his patrons, and his visits to their houses always brought a holiday spirit along with them. When he came, there was sure to be a dance in the evening after the hours of labour, he himself good-naturedly supplying them with the music. In return for this they would get up a little underhand collection for him, amounting probably to a couple of shillings or half-a-crown, which some of them, under pretence of taking the snuff-box out of his pocket to get a pinch, would delicately and ingeniously slip into it, lest he might feel the act as bringing down the dancing-master to the level of the mere fiddler. He, on the other hand, not to be outdone in kindness, would, at the conclusion of the little festivity, desire them to lay down a door, on which he usually danced a few favourite hornpipes to the music of his own fiddle. This, indeed, was the great master-feat of his art, and was looked upon as such by himself, as well as by the people.

Indeed, the old dancing-master had some very marked outlines of character peculiar to himself. His dress, for instance, was always far above the fiddler's, and this was the pride of his heart. He also made it a point to wear a castor,

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or Caroline hat, be the same "shocking bad" or otherwise; but above all things, his soul within him was set upon a watch, and no one could gratify him more, than by asking him before company what o'clock it was. He also contrived to carry an ornamental staff, made of ebony, hiccory, mahogany, or some rare description of cane—which, if possible, had a silver head and a silk tassel. This the dancing-masters in general seemed to consider as a kind of baton or wand of office, without which I never yet knew one of them to go. But of all the parts of dress used to discriminate them from the fiddler, we must place, as standing far before the rest, the dancing-master's pumps and stockings, for shoes he seldom wore. The utmost limit of their ambition appeared to be such a jaunty neatness about that part of them in which the genius of their business lay, as might indicate the extraordinary lightness and activity which were expected from them by the people, in whose opinion the finest stocking, the lightest shoe, and the most symmetrical leg, uniformly denoted the most accomplished teacher.

The Irish dancing-master was also a great hand at match-making, and indeed some of them were known to negotiate as such between families as well as individual lovers, with all the ability of a first-rate diplomatist. Unlike the fiddler, the dancing-master had fortunately the use of his eyes; and as there is scarcely any scene in which to a keen observer the symptoms of the passion—to wit, blushings, glances, squeezes of the hand, and stealthy whisperings—are more frequent or signficant, so is it no wonder indeed that a sagacious looker-on, such as he generally was, knew how to avail himself of them, and to become in many instances a necessary party to their successful issue.

In the times of our fathers it pretty frequently happened that the dancing-master professed another accomplishment, which in Ireland, at least, where it is born with us, might

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appear to be a superfluous one; we mean, that of fencing, or to speak more correctly, cudgel-playing. Fencing-schools of this class were nearly as common in these times as dancing-schools, and it was not at all unusual for one man to teach both.

After all, the old dancing-master, in spite of his most strenuous efforts to the contrary, bore, in simplicity of manners, in habits of life, and in the happy spirit which he received from, and impressed upon, society, a distant but not indistinct resemblance to the fiddler. Between these two, however, no good feeling subsisted. The one looked up at the other as a man who was unnecessarily and unjustly placed above him; whilst the other looked down upon him as a mere drudge, through whom those he taught practised their accomplishments. This petty rivalry was very amusing, and the "boys," to do them justice, left nothing undone to keep it up. The fiddler had certainly the best of the argument, whilst the other had the advantage of a higher professional position. The one was more loved, the other more respected. Perhaps very few things in humble life could be so amusing to a speculative mind, or at the same time capable of affording a better lesson to human pride, than the almost miraculous skill with which the dancing-master contrived, when travelling, to carry his fiddle about him, so as that it might not be seen, and he himself mistaken for nothing but a fiddler. This was the sorest blow his vanity could receive, and a source of endless vexation to all his tribe. Our manners, however, are changed, and neither the fiddler nor the dancing-master possesses the fine mellow tints, nor that depth of colouring, which formerly brought them and their rich household associations home at once to the heart.

One of the most amusing specimens of the dancing-master that I ever met, was the person alluded to at the close of my paper on the Irish Fiddler, under the nickname of Buckram-

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Back. This man had been a drummer in the army for some time, where he had learned to play the fiddle; but it appears that he possessed no relish whatever for a military life, as his abandonment of it without even the usual forms of a discharge or furlough, together with a back that had become cartilaginous from frequent flogging, could abundantly testify. It was from the latter circumstance that he had received his nickname.

Buckram-Back was a dapper light little fellow, with a rich Tipperary brogue, crossed by a lofty strain of illegitimate English, which he picked up whilst abroad in the army. His habiliments sat as tight upon him as he could readily wear them, and were all of the shabby-genteel class. His crimped black coat was a closely worn second-hand, and his crimped face quite as much of a second-hand as the coat. I think I see his little pumps, little white stockings, his coaxed drab breeches, his hat, smart in its cock but brushed to a polish and standing upon three hairs, together with his tight questionably-coloured gloves, all before me. Certainly he was the jauntiest little cock living—quite a blood, ready to fight any man, and a great defender of the fair sex, whom he never addressed except in that high-flown bombastic style so agreeable to most of them, called by their flatterers the complimentary, and by their friends the fulsome. He was in fact a public man, and up to every thing. You met him at every fair, where he only had time to give you a wink as he passed, being just then engaged in a very particular affair; but he would tell you again. At cock-fights he was a very busy personage, and an angry better from half-a-crown downwards. At races he was a knowing fellow, always shook hands with the winning jockey, and then looked pompously about, that folks might see that he was hand and glove with people of importance. The house where Buckram-Back kept his school, which was open only after the hours of labour, was an uninhabited cabin, the roof of which, at a particular spot, was supported by a post that stood upright

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from the floor. It was built upon an elevated situation, and commanded a fine view of the whole country for miles about it. A pleasant sight it was to see the modest and pretty girls, dressed in their best frocks and ribbons, radiating in little groups from all directions, accompanied by their partners or lovers, making way through the fragrant summer fields, of a calm cloudless evening, to this happy scene of innocent amusement.

And yet what an epitome of general life, with its passions, jealousies, plots, calumnies, and contentions, did this little segment of society present! There was the shrew, the slattern, the coquette, and the prude, as sharply marked within this their humble sphere, as if they appeared on the world's wider stage, with half its wealth and all its temptations to draw forth their prevailing foibles. There, too, was the bully, the rake, the liar, the coxcomb, and the coward, each as perfect and distinct in his kind as if he had run through a lengthened course of fashionable dissipation, or spent a fortune in acquiring his particular character. The elements of the human heart, however, and the passions that make up the general business of life, are the same in high and low, and exist with impulses as strong in the cabin as in the palace. The only difference is, that they have not equal room to play.

Buckram-Back's system, in originality of design, in comic conception of decorum, and in the easy practical assurance with which he wrought it out, was never equalled, much less surpassed. Had the impudent little rascal confined himself to dancing as usually taught, there would have been nothing so ludicrous or uncommon in it; but no: he was such a stickler for example in every thing, that no other mode of instruction would satisfy him. Dancing! Why, it was the least part of what he taught or professed to teach.

In the first place, he undertook to teach every one of us—for I had the honour of being his pupil—how to enter a

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drawing-room "in the most fashionable manner alive," as he said himself.

Secondly. He was the only man, he said, who could in the most agreeable and polite style taich a gintleman how to salute, or, as he termed it, how to shiloote, a leedy. This he taught, he said, wid great success.

Thirdly. He could taich every leedy and gintleman how to make the most beautiful bow or curchy on airth, by only imitating himself—one that would cause a thousand people, if they were all present, to think that it was particularly intended only for aich o' themselves!

Fourthly. He taught the whole art o' courtship wid all peliteness and success, accordin' as it was practised in Paris durin' the last saison.

Fifthly. He could taich thim how to write love-letthers and valentines accordin' to the Great Macademy of compliments, which was supposed to be invinted by Bonaparte when he was writing love-letthers to both his wives.

Sixthly. He was the only person who could taich the famous dance called Sir Roger de Coverly, or the Helter-Skelter Drag, which comprehinded widin itself all the advantages and beauties of his whole system—in which every gintleman was at liberty to pull every leedy where he plaised, and every leedy was at liberty to go wherever he pulled her.

With such advantages in prospect, and a method of instruction so agreeable, it is not to be wondered at that this establishment was always in a most flourishing condition. The truth is, he had it so contrived that every gentlemen should salute his lady as often as possible, and for this purpose actually invented dances, in which not only should every gentleman salute every lady, but every lady, by way of returning the compliment, should render a similar kindness to every gentleman. Nor had his male pupils all this prodigality

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of salutation to themselves, for the amorous little rascal always commenced first and ended last, in order, he said, that they might *cotch* the manner from himself. "I do this, leedies and gintlemen, as your moral (model), and because it's part o' *my* system—ahem!"

And then he would perk up his little hard face, that was too barren to produce more than an abortive smile, and twirl like a wagtail over the floor, in a manner that he thought irresistible.

Whether Buckram-Back was the only man who tried to reduce kissing to a system of education in this country, I do not know. It is certainly true that many others of his stamp made a knowledge of the arts and modes of courtship, like him, a part of the course. The forms of love-letters, valentines, &c., were taught their pupils of both sexes, with many other polite particulars, which it is to be hoped have disappeared for ever.

One thing, however, to the honour of our country-women we are bound to observe, which is, that we do not remember a single result incompatible with virtue to follow from the little fellow's system, which, by the way, was in *this* respect peculiar only to himself, and not the general custom of the country. Several weddings, unquestionably, we had, more than might otherwise have taken place, but in not one instance have we known any case in which a female was brought to unhappiness or shame.

We shall now give a brief sketch of Buckram-Back's manner of tuition, begging our readers at the same time to rest assured that any sketch we could give would fall far short of the original.

"Paddy Corcoran, walk out an' 'inther your drawin'-room;' an' let Miss Judy Hanratty go out along wid you, an' come in as Mrs. Corcoran."

"Faith, I'm afeard, masther, I'll make a bad hand of it;

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but, sure, it's something to have Judy here to keep me in countenance."

"Is that by way of compliment, Paddy? Mr. Corcoran, you should ever an' always spaik to a leedy in an alyblasther tone; for that's the cut." [*Paddy and Judy retire.*

"Mickey Scanlan, come up here, now that we're braithin' a little; an' you Miss Grauna Mulholland, come up along wid him. Miss Mulholland, you are masther of your five positions and your fifteen attidudes, I believe?" "Yes, sir." "Very well, Miss. Mickey Scanlan—ahem—*Misther* Scanlan, can *you* perform the positions also, Mickey?"

"Yes, sir; but you remimber I stuck at the eleventh altitude."

"Attitude, sir—no matther. Well, Misther Scanlan, do you know how to shiloote a leedy, Mickey?"

"Faix, it's hard to say, sir, till we thry; but I'm very willin' to larn it. I'll do my best, an' the best can do no more."

"Very well—ahem! Now merk me, Misther Scanlan; you approach your leedy in this style, bowin' politely, as I do. Miss Mulholland, will you allow me the honour of a heavenly shiloote? Don't bow, ma'am; you are to curchy, you know; a little lower *eef* you plaise. Now you say, 'Wid the greatest pleasure in life, sir, an' many thanks for the feevour.' (*Smack.*) There, now, you are to make another curchy politely, an' say, 'Thank you, kind sir, I owe you one.' Now, Misther Scanlan, proceed."

"I'm to imitate you, masther, as well as I can, sir, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, you are to imiteet *me*. But hould, sir; did you see me lick my lips or pull up my breeches? Be gorra, that's shockin' unswintemintal. First make a curchy, a bow I mane, to Miss Grauna. Stop again, sir; are you goin' to sthrangle the leedy? Why, one would think that it's about to teek laive of her for ever you are. Gently, Misther Scanlan; gently, Mickey. There:—well, that's an improvement. Prac-

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tice, Misther Scanlan, practice will do all, Mickey; but don't smack so loud, though. Hilloo, gintlemen! where's our drawin'-room folk? Go out, one of you, for Misther an' Mrs. Paddy Corcoran."

Corcoran's face now appears peeping in at the door, lit up with a comic expression of genuine fun, from whatever cause it may have proceeded.

"Aisy, Misther Corcoran; an' where's Mrs. Corcoran, sir?"

"Are we both to come in together, masther?"

"Certainly. Turn out both your toeses—turn them out, I say."

"Faix, sir, it's aisier said than done wid some of us."

"I know that, Misther Corcoran; but practice is every thing. The bow legs are strongly against you, I grant. Hut, tut, Misther Corcoran—why, if your toes wor where your heels is, you'd be exactly in the first position, Paddy. Well, both of you turn out your toeses; look street forward; clap your caubeen—hem!—your castor undher your ome (arm), an' walk into the middle of the flure, wid your head up. Stop, take care o' the post. Now, take your caubeen, castor I mane, in your right hand; give it a flourish. Aisy, Mrs. Hanratty—Corcoran I mane—it's not *you* that's to flourish. Well, flourish your castor, Paddy, and thin make a graceful bow to the company. Leedies and gintlemen"—

"Leedies and gintlemen"—

"I'm your most obadient sarvint"—

"I'm your most obadient sarwint."

"Tuts, man alive! that's not a bow. Look at this: *there's* a bow for you. Why, instead of meeking a bow, you appear as if you wor goin' to sit down wid an embargo (lumbago) in your back. Well, practice is every thing; an' there's luck in leisure."

"Dick Doorish, will you come up, and thry if you can meek any thing of that threblin' step. You're a purty lad, Dick; you're a purty lad, Misther Doorish, wid a pair o' left legs an

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you, to expect to larn to dance; but don't despeer, man alive. I'm not afeard but I'll meek a graceful slip o' you yet. Can you meek a curchy?"

"Not right, sir, I doubt."

"Well, sir, I know that; but, Misther Doorish, you ought to know how to meek both a bow and a curchy. Whin you marry a wife, Misther Doorish, it mightn't come wrong for you to know how to taich her a curchy. Have you the *gad* and *suggaun* wid you?" "Yes, sir." "Very well, on wid them; the suggaun on the right foot, or what ought to be the right foot, an' the gad upon what ought to be the left. Are you ready?" "Yes, sir." "Come, thin, do as I bid you.—Rise upon suggaun an' sink upon gad; rise upon suggaun an' sink upon gad; rise upon——Hould, sir; you're sinkin' upon suggaun an' risin' upon gad, the very thing begad you ought *not* to do. But, God help you! sure you're left-legged! Ah, Misther Doorish, it 'ud be a long time before you'd be able to dance Jig Polthogue, or the College Hornpipe upon a drum-head, as I often did. However, don't despeer, Misther Doorish; if I could only get you to know your right leg—but, God help you! sure you hav'nt such a thing—from your left, I'd make something of you yet, Dick."

The Irish dancing-masters were eternally at daggers-drawn among themselves; but as they seldom met, they were forced to abuse each other at a distance, which they did with a virulence and scurrility proportioned to the space between them. Buckram-Back had a rival of this description, who was a sore thorn in his side. His name was Paddy Fitzpatrick, and from having been a horse-jockey, he gave up the turf, and took to the calling of a dancing-master. Buckram-Back sent a message to him to the effect that "if he could not dance Jig Polthogue on the drum-head, he had better hould his tongue for ever." To this Paddy replied, by asking if he was the man to dance the Connaught Jockey upon the

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saddle of a blood-horse, and the animal at a three-quarter gallop.

At length the friends on each side, from a natural love of fun, prevailed upon them to decide their claims as follows:—Each master with twelve of his pupils, was to dance against his rival with twelve of his; the match to come off on the top of Mallybeny hill, which commanded a view of the whole parish. I have already mentioned that in Buckram-Back's school there stood near the middle of the floor a post, which, according to some new manœuvre of his own, was very convenient as a guide to the dancers when going through the figure. Now, at the spot where this post stood it was necessary to make a curve, in order to form part of the figure of eight, which they were to follow; but as many of them were rather impenetrable to a due conception of the line of beauty, he forced them to turn round the post rather than make an acute angle of it, which several of them did. Having premised thus much, we proceed with our narrative.

At length they met, and it would have been a matter of much difficulty to determine their relative merits, each was such an admirable match for the other. When Buckram-Back's pupils, however, came to perform, they found that the absence of the post was their ruin. To the post they had been trained —accustomed;—with *it* they could dance; but wanting that, they were like so many ships at sea without rudders or compasses. Of course a scene of ludicrous confusion ensued, which turned the laugh against poor Buckram-Back, who stood likely to explode with shame and venom. In fact he was in an agony.

"Gintlemen, turn the post!" he shouted, stamping upon the ground, and clenching his little hands with fury; "leedies, remimber the post! Oh, for the honour of Kilnahushogue don't be bate. The post! gintlemen; leedies, the post, if you love me. Murdher alive, the post!"

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"Be gorra, masther, the jockey will distance us," replied Bob Magawly; "it's likely to be the *winnin'-post* to him, any how."

"Any money," shouted the little fellow, "any money for long Sam Sallaghan; he'd do the post to the life. Mind it, boys dear, mind it or we're lost. Divil a bit they heed me; it's a flock o' bees or sheep they're like. Sam Sallaghan where are you? The post, you blackguards!"

"Oh, masther dear, if we had even a fishin'-rod, or a crow-bar, or a poker, we might do yet. But, anyhow, we had better give in, for it's only worse we're gettin'."

At this stage of the proceedings Paddy came over, and, making a low bow, asked him, "Arra, how do you feel, Misther Dogherty? for such was Buckram-Back's name.

"Sir," replied Buckram-Back, bowing low, however, in return, "I'll take the shine out of you yet. Can you shiloote a leedy wid me?—that's the chat! Come, gintlemen, show them what's betther than fifty posts—shiloote your partners like Irishmen. Kilnahushogue for ever!"

The scene that ensued baffles all description. The fact is, the little fellow had them trained, as it were, to kiss in platoons, and the spectators were literally convulsed with laughter at this most novel and ludicrous character which Buckram-Back gave to his defeat, and the ceremony which he introduced. The truth is, he turned the laugh completely against his rival, and swaggered off the ground in high spirits, exclaiming, "He know how to shiloote a leedy! Why, the poor spalpeen never kissed any woman but his mother, an' her only when she was dyin'. Hurra for Kilnahushogue!"

Such, reader, is a slight and very imperfect sketch of an Irish dancing-master, which if it possesses any merit at all, is to be ascribed to the circumstance that it is drawn from life, and combines, however faintly, most of the points essential to our conception of the character.

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MARY MURRAY,

THE IRISH MATCH-MAKER.

THOUGH this word at a glance may be said to explain itself, yet lest our English or Scotch readers might not clearly understand its meaning, we shall briefly give them such a definition of it as will enable them to comprehend it in its full extent. The Irish match-maker, then, is a person selected to conduct reciprocity treaties of the heart between lovers themselves in the first instance, or, where the principal parties are indifferent, between their respective families, when the latter happen to be of opinion that it is a safer and more prudent thing to consult the interest of the young folk rather than their inclination. In short, the match-maker is the person engaged in carrying, from one party to another all the messages, letters, tokens, presents, and secret communications of the tender passion, in whatever shape or character the said parties may deem it proper to transmit them. The match-maker, therefore, is a general negotiator in all such matters of love or interest as are designed by the principals or their friends to terminate in the honourable bond of marriage; for with nothing morally improper or licentious, or approaching to the character of an intrigue will the regular Irish match-maker have anything at all to do. The match-maker, therefore, after all, is only the creature of necessity, and is never engaged by an Irishman unless to remove such preliminary obstacles as may stand in the way of his own direct operations. In point of fact, the match-maker is nothing but a pioneer, who, after the plan of the attack has been laid down, clears away some of the

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rougher difficulties, until the regular advance is made, the siege opened in due form, and the citadel successfully entered by the principal party.

We have said thus much to prevent our fair neighbours of England and Scotland from imagining that because such a character as the Irish match-maker exists at all, Irishmen are personally deficient in that fluent energy which is so necessary to express the emotions of the tender passion. Addison has proved to the satisfaction of any rational mind that modesty and assurance are inseparable—that a blushing face may accompany a courageous, nay, a desperate heart—and that, on the contrary, an abundance of assurance may be associated with a very handsome degree of modesty. In love matters, I grant, modesty is the *forte* of an Irishman, whose character in this respect has been unconsciously hit off by the poet. Indeed he may truly be termed *vultus ingenui puer, ingenuique pudoris ;* which means, when translated, that in looking for a wife an Irishman is "a *boy* of an *easy* face, and remarkable modesty."

At the head of the match-makers, and far above all competitors, stands the Irish midwife, of whose abilities in this way it is impossible to speak too highly. And let not our readers imagine that the duties which devolve upon her, as well as upon match-makers in general, are slight or easily discharged. To conduct a matter of this kind ably, great tact, knowledge of character, and very delicate handling, are necessary. To be incorruptible, faithful to both parties, not to give offence to either, and to obviate detection in case of secret bias or partiality, demand talents of no common order. The amount of fortune is often to be regulated—the good qualities of the parties placed in the best, or, what is often still more judicious, in the most suitable light—and when there happens to be a scarcity of the commodity, it must be furnished from her own invention. The miser is to be softened, the contemptuous tone

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of the purse-proud *bodagh* lowered without offence, the crafty cajoled, and sometimes, the unsuspecting over-reached. Now, all this requires an able hand, as match-making in general among the Irish does. Indeed I question whether the wiliest politician that ever attempted to manage a treaty of peace between two hostile powers could have a more difficult card to play than often falls to the lot of the Irish match-maker.

The midwife, however, from her confidential intercourse with the sex, and the respect with which both young and old of them look upon her, is peculiarly well qualified for the office. She has seen the youth shoot up and ripen into the young man—she has seen the young man merged into the husband, and the husband very frequently lost in the wife. Now, the marks and tokens by which she noted all this are as perceptible in the young of this day as they were in the young of fifty years ago; she consequently knows from experience how to manage each party, so as to bring about the consummation which she so devoutly wishes.

Upon second thoughts, however, we are inclined to think after all, that the right of precedence upon this point does not exclusively belong to the midwife; or at least, that there exists another person who contests it with her so strongly that we are scarcely capable of determining their respective claims: this is the *Cosherer*. The cosherer in Ireland is a woman who goes from one relation's house to another, from friend to friend, from acquaintance to acquaintance—is always welcome, and uniformly well treated. The very extent of her connexions makes her independent; so that if she receives an affront, otherwise a cold reception, from one, she never feels it to affect her comfort, but, on the contrary, carries it about with her in the shape of a complaint to the rest, and details it with such a rich spirit of vituperative enjoyment, that we believe in our soul some of her friends, knowing what healthful occupation it gives her, actually affront her from pure kindness.

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The cosherer is the very impersonation of industry. Unless when asleep, no mortal living ever saw her hands idle. Her principal employment is knitting; and whether she sits, stands, or walks, there she is with the end of the stocking under her arm, knit, knit, knitting. She also sews and quilts; and whenever a quilting is going forward she can tell you at once in what neighbour's house the quilting-frame was used last, and where it is now to be had; and when it has been got, she is all bustle and business, ordering and commanding about her—her large red three-cornered pincushion hanging conspicuously at her side, a lump of chalk in one hand, and a coil of twine in the other, ready to mark the pattern, whether it be wave, square, or diamond.

The cosherer is always dressed with neatness and comfort, but generally wears something about her that reminds one of a day gone by, and may be considered as the lingering remnant of some old custom that has fallen into disuse. This, slight as it is, endears her to many, for it stands out as the memorial of some old and perhaps affecting associations, which at its very appearance are called out from the heart in which they were slumbering.

It is impossible to imagine a happier life than that of the cosherer. She has evidently no trouble, no care, no children, nor any of the various claims of life, to disturb or encumber her. Wherever she goes she is made, and finds herself, perfectly at home. The whole business of her life is carrying about intelligence, making and projecting matches, singing old songs and telling old stories, which she frequently does with a feeling and unction not often to be met with. She will sing you the different sets and variations of the old airs, repeat the history and traditions of old families, recite *ranns*, interpret dreams, give the origin of old local customs, and tell a ghost story in a style that would make your hair stand on end. She is a bit of a doctress, too—an extensive herbalist, and is

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very skilful and lucky among children. In short, she is a perfect Gentleman's Magazine in her way—a regular repertory of traditionary lore, a collector and distributor of social antiquities, dealing in every thing that is time-worn or old, and handling it with such a quiet and antique air, that one would imagine her life to be a life not of years but of centuries, and that she had passed the greater portion of it, long as it was, in "wandering by the shores of old romance."

Such a woman the reader will at once perceive is a formidable competitor for popular confidence with the midwife. Indeed there is but one consideration alone upon which we would be inclined to admit that the latter has any advantage over her—and it is, that she *is the midwife;* a word which is a tower of strength to her, not only against all professional opponents, but against such analogous characters as would intrude even upon any of her subordinate or collateral offices. As match-makers, it is extremely difficult to decide between her and the cosherer; so much so, indeed, that we are disposed to leave the claim for priority undetermined. In this respect, each pulls in the same harness; and as they are so well matched, we will allow them to jog on side by side, drawing the youngsters of the neighbouring villages slowly but surely towards the land of matrimony.

In humble country life, as in high life, we find in nature the same principles and motives of action. Let not the speculating mother of rank, nor the husband-hunting dowager, imagine for a moment that the plans, stratagems, lures, and trap-falls, with which they endeavour to secure some wealthy fool for their daughter, are not known and practised—ay, and with as much subtlety and circumvention too—by the very humblest of their own sex. In these matters they have not one whit of superiority over the lowest, sharpest, and most fraudulent gossip of a country village, where the arts of women are almost as sagaciously practised, and the small scandal as ably detailed, as in the highest circles of fashion.

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The third great master of the art of match-making is the *Senachie*, who is nothing more or less than the counterpart of the cosherer; for as the cosherer is never of the male sex, so the senachie is never of the female. With respect to their habits and modes of life, the only difference between them is, that as the cosherer is never idle, so the senachie never works; and the latter is a far superior authority in old popular prophecy and genealogy. As a match-maker, however, the senachie comes infinitely short of the cosherer; for the truth is, that this branch of diplomacy falls naturally within the manœuvring and intriguing spirit of a woman.

Our readers are not to understand that in Ireland there exists, like the fiddler or dancing-master, a distinct character openly known by the appellation of match-maker. No such thing. On the contrary, the negotiations they undertake are all performed under false colours. The business, in fact, is close and secret, and always carried on with the profoundest mystery, veiled by the sanction of some other ostensible occupation.

One of the best specimens of the kind we ever met was old Mary Murray. Mary was a tidy creature of middle size, who always went dressed in a short crimson cloak, much faded, a striped red and blue drugget petticoat, and a heather-coloured gown of the same fabric. When walking, which she did with the aid of a light hazel staff hooked at the top, she generally kept the hood of the cloak over her head, which gave to her whole figure a picturesque effect; and when she threw it back, one could not help admiring how well her small but symmetrical features agreed with the dowd cap of white linen, with a plain muslin border, which she wore. A pair of blue stockings and sharp-pointed shoes, high in the heels, completed her dress. Her features were good-natured and Irish; but there lay over the whole countenance an expression of quickness and sagacity, contracted no doubt by an habitual exercise of

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penetration and circumspection. At the time I saw her she was very old, and I believe had the reputation of being the last in that part of the country who was known to go about from house to house spinning on the distaff, an instrument which has now passed away, being more conveniently replaced by the spinning-wheel.

The manner and style of Mary's visits were different from those of any other who could come to a farmer's house, or even to an humble cottage, for to the inmates of both were her services equally rendered. Let us suppose, for instance, the whole female part of a farmer's family assembled of a summer evening about five o'clock, each engaged in some domestic employment: in runs a lad who has been sporting about, breathlessly exclaiming, whilst his eyes are lit up with delight, "Mother! mother! here's Mary Murray coming down the boreen!" "Get out, avick; no, she's not." "Bad cess to me but she is; that I may never stir if she isn't! Now!" The whole family are instantly at the door to see if it be she, with the exception of the prettiest of them all, Kitty, who sits at her wheel and immediately begins to croon over an old Irish air, which is sadly out of tune; and well do we know, notwithstanding the mellow tones of that sweet voice, why it is so, and also why that youthful cheek, in which health and beauty meet, is now the colour of crimson.

"*Oh, Vara, acushla, cead millia failte ghud!* (Mary, darlin', a hundred thousand welcomes to you!) Och, musha, what kep' you away so long, Mary? Sure you won't lave us this month o' Sundays, Mary?" are only a few of the cordial expressions of hospitality and kindness with which she is received. But Kitty, whose cheek but a moment ago was carmine, why is it now pale as the lily?

"An' what news, Mary," asks one of her sisters; "sure you'll tell us every thing; won't you?"

"Throth, avillish, *I have no bad news*, any how—an' as to

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tellin' you *all*—Biddy, *lhig dumh*, let me alone. No, I have no bad news, God be praised, *but good news.*"

Kitty's cheek is again crimson, and her lips, ripe and red as cherries, expand with the sweet soft smile of her country, exhibiting a set of teeth for which many a countess would barter thousands, and giving out a breath more delicious than the fragrance of a summer meadow. Oh, no wonder, indeed, that the kind heart of Mary contains in its recesses a message to her as tender as ever was transmitted from man to woman!

"An', Kitty, acushla, where's the welcome from *you*, that's my favourite? Now don't be jealous, childre; sure you all know she is, an' ever an' always was."

"If it's not upon my lips, it's in my heart, Mary, an' from that heart you're welcome!"

She rises up and kisses Mary, who gives her one glance of meaning, accompanied by the slightest imaginable smile, and a gentle but significant pressure of the hand, which thrills to her heart and diffuses a sense of ecstacy through her whole spirit. Nothing now remains but the opportunity, which is equally sought for by Mary and her, to hear without interruption the purport of her lover's communication; and this we leave to lovers to imagine.

In Ireland, however odd it may seem, there occur among the very poorest classes some of the hardest and most penurious bargains in match-making that ever were heard of or known. Now, strangers might imagine that all this close higgling proceeds from a spirit naturally near and sordid, but it is not so. The real secret of it lies in the poverty and necessity of the parties, and chiefly in the bitter experience of their parents, who, having come together in a state of destitution, are anxious, each as much at the expense of the other as possible, to prevent their children from experiencing the same privation and misery which they themselves felt. Many a time have matches been suspended, or altogether

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broken off, because one party refuses to give his son "*a slip of a pig*," or another his daughter "a pair of blankets"; and it was no unusual thing for a match-maker to say, "Never mind; I have it all settled *but the slip*." One might naturally wonder why those who are so shrewd and provident upon this subject do not strive to prevent early marriages where the poverty is so great. So unquestionably they ought, but it is a settled usage of the country, and one, too, which Irishmen have never been in the habit of considering as an evil. We have no doubt that if they once began to reason upon it as such, they would be very strongly disposed to check a custom which has been the means of involving themselves and their unhappy offspring in misery, penury, and not unfrequently in guilt itself.

Mary, like many others in this world who are not conscious of the same failing, smelt strongly of the shop; in other words her conversation had a strong matrimonial tendency. No two beings ever lived so decidedly antithetical to each other in this point of view as the match-maker and the *Keener*. Mention the name of an individual or a family to the keener, and the medium through which her memory passes back to them is that of her professed employment—a mourner at wakes and funerals.

"Don't you know young Kelly of Tamlaght?"

"I do, avick," replies the keener, "and what about him?"

"Why he was married to-day mornin' to ould Jack M'Cluskey's daughter."

"Well, God grant them luck an' happiness, poor things! I do indeed remimber his father's wake an' funeral well—ould Risthard Kelly of Tamlaght—a dacent corpse he made for his years, an' well he looked. But indeed I *kneuw* by the colour that sted in his cheeks, and the limbs remaining soople for the twenty-four hours afther his departure, that some of the family 'ud follow him afore the year was

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out; * an' so she did. The youngest daughter, poor thing, by raison of a could she got, over-heatin' herself at a dance, was stretched beside him that very day was eleven months; and God knows it was from the heart my grief came for *her*—to see the poor handsome colleen laid low so soon. But when a gallopin' consumption sets in, avourneen, sure we all know what's to happen. In Crockaniska churchyard they sleep—the Lord make both their beds in heaven this day." The very reverse of this, but at the same time as inveterately professional, was Mary Murray.

"God save you, Mary."

"God save you kindly, avick. Eh!—let me look at you. Aren't you red Billy M'Guirk's son from Ballagh?"

"I am, Mary. An', Mary, how is yourself an' the world gettin' an?"

"Can't complain, dear, in such times. How are yez all at home, alanna?" "Faix, middlin' well, Mary, thank God an' you.—You heard of my grand uncle's death, big Ned M'Coul?"

"I did, avick, God rest him. Sure it's well I remimber his weddin', poor man, by the same atoken that I know one that helped him on wid it a thrifle. He was married in a blue coat and buckskins, an' wore a scarlet waistcoat that you'd see three miles off. Oh, well I remimber it. An' whin he was settin' out that mornin' to the priest's house, 'Ned,' says I, an' I fwhishspered him, 'dhrop a button on the right knee afore you get the words said.' '*Thighum*,' said he, wid a smile, an' he slipped ten thirteens into my hand as he spoke. 'I'll do it,' said he, 'and thin a fig for the fairies!'—because you see if there's a button of the right knee left unbuttoned, the fairies—this day's Friday, God stand betune us and harm!—can do neither hurt nor harm to sowl or body, an'

* Such is the superstition.

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sure that's a great blessin', avick. He left two fine slips o' girls behind him."

"He did so—as good-lookin' girls as there's in the parish."

"Faix, an' kind mother for them, avick. She'll be marryin' agin, I'm judgin', she bein' sich a fresh good-lookin' woman."

"Why, it's very likely, Mary."

"Troth its natural, achora. What can a lone woman do wid such a large farm upon her hands, widout having some one to manage it for her, an' prevint her from bein' imposed on? But indeed the first thing she ought to do is to marry off her two girls widout loss of time, in regard that it's hard to say how a stepfather an' thim might agree; and I've often known the mother herself, when she had a fresh family comin' an her, to be as unnatural to her fatherless childre as if she was a stranger to thim, and that the same blood did'nt run in their veins. Not saying that Mary M'Coul will or would act that way by her own; for indeed she's come of a kind ould stock, an' ought to have a good heart. Tell her, avick, when you see her, that I'll spind a day or two wid her—let me see—the day after to-morrow will be Palm Sunday—why, about the Aisther holidays."

"Indeed I will, Mary, with great pleasure."

"An' fwhishsper, dear, jist tell her that I've a thing to say to her—that I had a long dish o' discoorse about her wid *a friend o' mine.* You won't forget, now?"

"Oh the dickens a forget!"

"Thank you, dear: God mark you to grace, avourneen! When you're a little ouldher, maybe I'll be a friend to you yet."

This last intimation was given with a kind of mysterious benevolence, very visible in the complacent shrewdness of her face, and with a twinkle in the eye, full of grave humour and considerable self-importance, leaving the mind of the person she spoke to in such an agreeable uncertainty as

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rendered it a matter of great difficulty to determine whether she was serious or only in jest, but at all events throwing the onus of inquiry upon him.

The ease and tact with which Mary could involve two young persons of opposite sexes in a mutual attachment, were very remarkable. In truth, she was a kind of matrimonial incendiary, who went through the country holding her torch now to this heart and again to that—first to one and then to another, until she had the parish more or less in a flame. And when we consider the combustible materials of which the Irish heart is composed, it is no wonder indeed that the labour of taking the census in Ireland increases at such a rapid rate, during the time that elapses between the periods of its being made out. If Mary, for instance, met a young woman of her acquaintance accidentally—and it was wonderful to think how regularly these accidental meetings took place—she would address her probably somewhat as follows:—

"Arra, Biddy Sullivan, how are you, a-colleen?"

"Faix, bravely, thank you, Mary. How is yourself?"

"Indeed, thin' sorra a bit o' the health we can complain of, Bhried, barrin' whin this pain in the back comes upon us. The last time I seen your mother, Biddy, she was complainin' of a *weid.** I hope she's betther, poor woman?"

"Hut! bad scran to the thing ails her! She has as light a foot as e'er a one of us, an' can dance 'Jackson's mornin' brush' as well as ever she could."

"Throth, an' I'm proud to hear it. Och! och! 'Jackson's mornin' brush!' and it was she that *could* do it. Sure I remimber her wedding-day like yestherday. Ay, far an' near her fame wint as a dancer, an' the clanest-made girl that ever came from Lisbuie. Like yestherday do I remimber it, an' how the squire himself an' the ladies from the Big House came down to see herself an' your father, the bride and groom—an'

* A feverish cold.

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it wasn't on every hill head you'd get sich a couple—dancin' the same 'Jackson's mornin' brush.' Oh! it was far and near her fame wint for dancin' that.—An' is there no news wid you, Bhried, at all at all?"

"The sorra word, Mary: where 'ud I get news? Sure it's yourself that's always on the fut that ought to have the news for *us*, woman alive."

"An' maybe I have too. I was spaikin' to a friend o' mine about you the other day.'

"A friend o' yours, Mary! Why, what friend could it be?"

"A friend o' mine—ay, an' of yours too. Maybe you have more friends than you think, Biddy—and kind ones too, as far as wishin' you well goes, 't any rate. Ay have you faix, an' friends that e'er a girl in the parish might be proud to hear named in the one day wid her. Awouh!"

"Bedad we're in luck, thin, for that's more than I knew of. An' who may these great friends of ours be, Mary?"

"Awouh! Faix, as dacent a boy as ever broke bread the same boy is, 'and,' says he, 'if I had goold in bushelfuls, I'd think it too little for that girl;' but, poor lad, he's not aisy or happy in his mind in regard o' that. 'I'm afeard,' says he, 'that she'd put scorn upon me, an' not think me her aiquals. An' no more I am,' says he again, 'for where, afther all, would you get the likes of Biddy Sullivan?'—Poor boy! throth my heart aches for him!"

"Well, can't you fall in love wid him yourself, Mary, whoever he is?"

"Indeed, an' if I was at your age, it would be no shame to me to do so; but, to tell you the thruth, the sorra often ever the likes of Paul Heffernan came acrass me."

"Paul Heffernan! Why, Mary," replied Biddy, smiling with the assumed lightness of indifference, "is that your beauty? If it is, why, keep him, an' make much of him."

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"Oh, wurrah! the differ there is between the hearts an' tongues of some people—one from another—an' the way they spaik behind others' backs! Well, well, I'm sure that wasn't the way he spoke of you, Biddy; an' God forgive you for runnin' down the poor boy as you're doin'. Trogs! I believe you're the only girl would do it."

"Who, me! I'm not runnin' him down. I'm neither runnin' him up nor down. I have neither good nor bad to say about him—the boy's a black stranger to me, barrin' to know his face."

"Faix, an' he's in consate wid you these three months past, an' intinds to be at the dance on Friday next, in Jack Gormly's new house. Now, good bye, alanna; keep your own counsel till the time comes, an' mind what I said to you. It's not behind every ditch the likes of Paul Heffernan grows. *Bannaght lhath!* My blessin' be wid you!"

Thus would Mary depart just at the critical moment, for well she knew that by husbanding her information and leaving the heart something to find out, she took the most effectual steps to excite and sustain that kind of interest which is apt ultimately to ripen, even from its own agitation, into the attachment she is anxious to promote.

The next day, by a meeting similarly accidental, she comes in contact with Paul Heffernan, who, honest lad, had never probably bestowed a thought upon Biddy Sullivan in his life.

"*Morrow ghud*, Paul!—how is your father's son, ahager?"

"*Morrow ghutcha*, Mary!—my father's son wants nothin' but a good wife, Mary."

"An' it's not every set day or bonfire night that a good wife is to be had, Paul—that is, a *good* one, as you say; for, throth, there's many o' them in the market, sich as they are. I was talkin' about you to a friend of mine the other day—an', trogs, I'm afeard you're not worth all the abuse we gave you."

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"More power to you, Mary! I'm oblaged to you. But who is the friend in the manetime?"

"Poor girl! Throth, when your name slipped out an her, the point of a rush would take a drop of blood out o' her cheek, the way she crimsoned up. 'An', Mary,' says she, 'if ever I know you to breathe it to man or mortual, my lips I'll never open to you to my dyin' day.' Trogs, whin I looked at her, an' the tears standin' in her purty black eyes, I thought I didn't see a betther favoured girl, for both face and figure, this many a day, than the same Biddy Sullivan."

"Biddy Sullivan! Is that long Jack's daughter of Cargah?"

"The same. But, Paul, avick, if a syllable o' what I tould you——"

"Hut, Mary! honour bright! Do you think me a *stag*, that I'd go and inform on you?"

"Fwhishsper, Paul; she'll be at the dance on Friday next in Jack Gormly's new house. So *bannaght lhath*, an' think o' what I betrayed to you."

Thus did Mary very quietly and sagaciously bind two young hearts together, who probably might otherwise have never for a moment even thought of each other. Of course when Paul and Biddy met at the dance on the following Friday, the one was the object of the closest attention to the other; and each being prepared to witness strong proofs of attachment from the opposite party, every thing fell out exactly according to their expectations.

Sometimes it happens that a booby of a fellow, during his calf love, will employ a male friend to plead his suit with a pretty girl, who, if the principal party had spunk, might be very willing to marry him. To the credit of our fair countrywomen, however, be it said, that in scarcely one instance out of twenty does it happen, or has it ever happened, that any of them ever fails to punish the faint heart by bestowing the fair lady upon what is called the blackfoot or spokesman

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whom he selects to make love for him. In such a case it is very naturally supposed that the latter will speak two words for himself and one for his friend, and indeed the result bears out the supposition. Now, nothing on earth gratifies the heart of the established match-maker so much as to hear of such a disaster befalling a spoony. She exults over his misfortune for months, and publishes his shame to the uttermost bounds of her own little world, branding him as "a poor pitiful crature, who had not the courage to spaik up for himself, or—to employ them that could." In fact, she entertains much the same feeling against him that a regular physician would towards some weak-minded patient, who prefers the knavish ignorance of a quack to the skill and services of an able and educated medical practitioner.

Characters like Mary are fast disappearing in Ireland; and indeed in a country where the means of life were generally inadequate to the wants of the population, they were calculated, however warmly the heart may look back upon the memory of their services, to do more harm than good, by inducing young folks to enter into early and improvident marriages. They certainly sprang up from a state of society not thoroughly formed by proper education and knowledge—where the language of a people, too, was in many extensive districts in such a state of transition as in the interchange of affection to render an interpreter absolutely necessary. We have ourselves witnessed marriages where the husband and wife spoke the one English and the other Irish, each being able with difficulty to understand the other. In all such cases Mary was invaluable. She spoke Irish and English fluently, and indeed was acquainted with every thing in the slightest or most remote degree necessary to the conduct of a love affair, from the first glance up until the priest had pronounced the last words—or, to speak more correctly, until "the throwing of the stocking."

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Mary was invariably placed upon the *hob*, which is the seat of comfort and honour at a farmer's fireside, and there she sat neat and tidy, detailing all the news of the parish, telling them how such a marriage was one unbroken honeymoon—a sure proof, by the way, that she herself had a hand in it—and again, how another one did not turn out well, and she said so; "there was always a bad dhrop in the Haggarties; but, my dear, the girl herself was *for* him; so as she made her own bed she must lie in it, poor thing. Any way, thanks be to goodness I had nothing to do wid it!"

Mary was to be found in every fair and market, and always at a particular place at a certain hour of the day, where the parties engaged in a courtship were sure to meet her on these occasions. She took a chirping glass, but never so as to become unsteady. Great deference was paid to every thing she said; and if this was not conceded to her, she extorted it with a high hand. Nobody living could drink a health with half the comic significance that Mary threw into her eye when saying, "Well young couple, here's everything as you wish it!"

Mary's motions from place to place were usually very slow, and for the best reason in the world, because she was frequently interrupted. For instance, if she met a young man on her way, ten to one but he stood and held a long and earnest conversation with her; and that it was both important and confidential, might easily be gathered from the fact that whenever a stranger passed, it was either suspended altogether, or carried on in so low a tone as to be inaudible. This held equally good with the girls. Many a time have I seen them retracing their steps, and probably walking back a mile or two, all the time engaged in discussing some topic evidently of more than ordinary interest to themselves. And when they shook hands and bade each other good bye, heavens! at what a pace did the latter scamper homewards across fields and ditches, in order to make up for the time she had lost!

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Nobody ever saw Mary receive a penny of money, and yet when she took a fancy, it was beyond any doubt that she has often been known to assist young folks in their early struggles; but in no instance was the slightest aid ever afforded to any one whose union she had not herself been instrumental in bringing about. As to the *when* and the *how* she got this money, and the great quantity of female apparel which she was known to possess, we think we see our readers smile at the simplicity of those who may not be able to guess the several sources from whence she obtained it.

One other fact we must mention before we close this sketch of her character. There were *some* houses—we will not, for we dare not, say *how many*—into which Mary was never seen to enter. This, however, was not her fault. Every one knew that what she did, she did always for the best; and if some small bits of execration were occasionally levelled at her, it was not more than the parties levelled at each other. All marriages cannot be happy; and indeed it was a creditable proof of Mary Murray's sagacity that so few of those effected through her instrumentality were unfortunate.

Poor Mary! match-making was the great business of your simple but not absolutely harmless life. You are long since, we trust, gone to the happy place where there are neither marryings nor givings in marriage, but where you will have a long Sabbath from your old habits and tendencies. We love for more reasons than either one or two to think of your faded crimson cloak, peaked shoes, hazel staff, clear grey eye, and nose and chin that were so full of character. As you used to say yourself, *bannaght lhath!*—my blessing be with you!

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BOB PENTLAND;

OR,

THE GAUGER OUTWITTED.

THAT the Irish are a ready-witted people, is a fact to the truth of which testimony has been amply borne both by their friends and enemies. Many causes might be brought forward to account for this questionable gift, if it were our intention to be philosophical; but as the matter has been so generally conceded, it would be but a waste of logic to prove to the world that which the world cares not about, beyond the mere fact that it is so. On this or any other topic one illustration is worth twenty arguments, and, accordingly, instead of broaching a theory we shall relate a story.

Behind the hill or rather mountain of Altnaveenan lies one of those deep and almost precipitous valleys, on which the practised eye of an illicit distiller would dwell with delight, as a topography not likely to be invaded by the unhallowed feet of the gauger and his red-coats. In point of fact, the spot we speak of was from its peculiarly isolated situation nearly invisible, unless to such as came very close to it. Being so completely hemmed in and concealed by the round and angular projections of the mountain hills, you could never dream of its existence at all, until you came upon the very verge of the little precipitous gorge which led into it. This advantage of position was not, however, its only one. It is true indeed that the moment you had entered it, all possibility of its being applied to the purposes of distillation at once vanished, and you consequently could not help exclaiming, "what a pity that

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so safe and beautiful a nook should have not a single spot on which to erect a still-house, or rather on which to raise a sufficient stream of water to the elevation necessary for the process of distilling." If a gauger actually came to the little chasm, and cast his scrutinizing eye over it, he would immediately perceive that the erection of a private still in such a place was a piece of folly not generally to be found in the plans of those who have recourse to such practices.

This absence, however, of the requisite conveniences was only apparent, not real. To the right, about one hundred yards above the entrance to it, ran a ledge of rocks, some fifty feet high, or so. Along the lower brows, near the ground, grew thick matted masses of long heath, which covered the entrance to a cave about as large and as high as an ordinary farm-house. Through a series of small fissures in the rocks which formed its roof, descended a stream of clear soft water, precisely in body and volume such as was actually required by the distiller; but, unless by lifting up this mass of heath, no human being could for a moment imagine that there existed any such grotto, or so unexpected and easy an entrance to it. Here there was a private still-house made by the hand of nature herself, such as no art or ingenuity of man could equal.

Now it so happened that about the period we write of, there lived in our parish two individuals so antithetical to each other in their pursuits of life, that we question whether throughout all the instinctive antipathies of nature we could find any two animals more destructive of each other than the two we mean—to wit, Bob Pentland, the gauger, and little George Steen, the illicit distiller. Pentland was an old, stanch, well-trained fellow, of about fifty years or more, steady and sure, and with all the characteristic points of the high-bred gauger about him. He was a tallish man, thin but lathy, with a hooked nose that could scent the tread of a

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distiller with the keenness of a slew-hound; his dark eye was deep-set, circumspect, and roguish in its expression, and his shaggy brow seemed always to be engaged in calculating whereabouts his inveterate foe, little George Steen, that eternally blinked him, when almost in his very fangs, might then be distilling. To be brief, Pentland was proverbial for his sagacity and adroitness in detecting distillers, and little George was equally proverbial for having always baffled him, and that, too, sometimes under circumstances where escape seemed hopeless.

The incidents which we are about to detail occurred at that period of time when the collective wisdom of our legislators thought it advisable to impose a fine upon the whole townland in which the Still, Head, and Worm, might be found; thus opening a door for knavery and fraud, and, as it proved in most cases, rendering the innocent as liable to suffer for an offence they never contemplated, as the guilty who planned and perpetrated it. The consequence of such a law was, that still-houses were always certain to be erected either at the very verge of the neighbouring districts, or as near them as the circumstances of convenience and situation would permit. The moment of course that the hue-and-cry of the gauger and his myrmidons was heard upon the wind, the whole apparatus was immediately heaved over the *mering* to the next townland, from which the fine imposed by parliament was necessarily raised, whilst the crafty and offending district actually escaped. The state of society generated by such a blundering and barbarous statute as this, was dreadful. In the course of a short time, reprisals, law-suits, battles, murders, and massacres, multiplied to such an extent throughout the whole country, that the sapient senators who occasioned such commotion were compelled to repeal their own act as soon as they found how it worked. Necessity, together with being the mother of invention, is also the cause of many an accidental discovery.

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Pentland had been so frequently defeated by little George, that he vowed never to rest until he had secured him; and George on the other hand frequently told him—for they were otherwise on the best terms—that he defied him, or as he himself more quaintly expressed it, "that he defied the devil, the world, and Bob Pentland." The latter, however, was a very sore thorn in his side, and drove him from place to place, and from one haunt to another, until he began to despair of being able any longer to outwit him, or to find within the parish any spot at all suitable for distillation with which Pentland was not acquainted. In this state stood matters between them, when George fortunately discovered at the hip of Altnaveenan hill the natural grotto we have just sketched so briefly. Now, George was a man, as we have already hinted, of great fertility of resources; but there existed in the same parish another distiller who outstripped him in that far-sighted cunning which is so necessary in misleading or circumventing such a sharp-scented old hound as Pentland. This was little Mickey M'Quade, a short-necked squat little fellow with bow legs, who might be said rather to creep in his motion than to walk. George and Mickey were intimate friends, independently of their joint antipathy against the gauger, and, truth to tell, much of the mortification and many of the defeats which Pentland experienced at George's hands, were, *sub rosa*, to be attributed to Mickey. George was a distiller from none of the motives which generally actuate others of that class. He was in truth an analytic philosopher—a natural chemist never out of some new experiment—and we have reason to think might have been the Kane, or Faraday, or Dalton, of his day, had he only received a scientific education. Not so honest Mickey, who never troubled his head about an experiment, but only thought of making a good running, and defeating the gauger. The first thing of course that George did, was to consult Mickey, and both accordingly took a walk

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up to the scene of their future operations. On examining it, and fully perceiving its advantages, it might well be said that the look of exultation and triumph which passed between them was not unworthy of their respective characters.

"This will do," said George. Eh—don't you think we'll put our finger in Pentland's eye yet?" Mickey spat sagaciously over his beard, and after a second glance gave one grave grin which spoke volumes. "It'll do," said he; "but there's one point to be got over that maybe you didn't think of; an' you know that half a blink, half a point, is enough for Pentland."

"What is it?"

"What do you intend to do with the smoke when the fire's lit? There'll be no keepin' *that* down. Let Pentland see but as much smoke risin' as would come out of an ould woman's dudeen, an' he'd have us."

George started, and it was clear by the vexation and disappointment which were visible on his brow that unless this untoward circumstance could be managed, their whole plan was deranged, and the cave of no value.

"What's to be done?" he inquired of his cooler companion. "If we can't get over this, we may bid good bye to it."

"Never mind," said Mickey; "I'll manage it, and *do* Pentland still." "Ay, but how?"

"It's no matter. Let us not lose a minute in settin' to work. Lave the other thing to me; an' if I don't account for the smoke without discoverin' the entrance to the still, I'll give you lave to crop the ears off my head."

George knew the cool but steady self-confidence for which Mickey was remarkable, and accordingly, without any further interrogatory, they both proceeded to follow up their plan of operations.

In those times when distillation might be truly considered as almost universal, it was customary for farmers to build

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their out-houses with secret chambers and other requisite partitions necessary for carrying it on. Several of them had private stores built between false walls, the entrance to which was only known to a few, and many of them had what were called *Malt-steeps* sunk in hidden recesses and hollow gables, for the purpose of steeping the barley, and afterwards of turning and airing it, until it was sufficiently hard to be kiln-dried and ground. From the mill it was usually conveyed to the still-house upon what were termed *Slipes*, a kind of car that was made without wheels, in order the more easily to pass through morasses and bogs which no wheeled vehicle could encounter.

In the course of a month or so, George and Mickey, aided by their friends, had all the apparatus of keeve, hogshead, &c., together with Still, Head, and Worm, set up and in full work.

"And now Mickey," inquired his companion, "how will you manage about the smoke? for you know that the two worst informers against a private distiller, barrin' a *stag*, is a smoke by day an' a fire by night."

"I know that," replied Mickey; "an' a rousin' smoke we'll have, for fraid a little puff wouldn't do us. Come, now, an' I'll show you."

They both ascended to the top, where Mickey had closed all the open fissures of the roof with the exception of that which was directly over the fire of the still. This was at best not more than six inches in breadth, and about twelve long. Over it he placed a piece of strong plate-iron perforated with holes, and on this he had a fire of turf, beside which sat a little boy who acted as a vidette. The thing was simple but effective. Clamps of turf were at every side of them, and the boy was instructed, if the gauger, whom he well knew, ever appeared, to heap on fresh fuel, so as to increase the smoke in such a manner as to induce him to suppose that *all* he saw of it proceeded merely from the fire before him. In fact, the

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smoke from the cave below was so completely identified with and lost in that which was emitted from the fire above, that no human being could penetrate the mystery, if not made previously acquainted with it. The writer of this saw it during the hottest process of distillation, and failed to make the discovery, although told that the still-house was within a circle of three hundred yards, the point he stood on being considered the centre. On more than one occasion has he absconded from home, and spent a whole night in the place, seized with that indescribable fascination which such a scene holds forth to youngsters, as well as from his irrepressible anxiety to hear the old stories and legends with the recital of which they generally pass the night.

In this way, well provided against the gauger—indeed much better than our readers are yet aware of, as they shall understand by and bye—did George, Mickey, and their friends, proceed for the greater part of a winter without a single visit from Pentland. Several successful runnings had come off, which had of course turned out highly profitable, and they were just now preparing to commence their last, not only for the season, but the last they should ever work together, as George was making preparations to go early in the spring to America. Even this running was going on to their satisfaction, and the singlings had been thrown again into the still, from the worm of which projected the strong medicinal *first-shot* as the doubling commenced—this last term meaning the spirit in its pure and finished state. On this occasion the two worthies were more than ordinarily anxious, and certainly doubled their usual precautions against a surprise, for they knew that Pentland's visits resembled the pounces of a hawk or the springs of a tiger more than any thing else to which they could compare them. In this they were not disappointed. When the doubling was about half finished, he made his appearance, attended by a strong party of reluctant soldiers—for indeed it

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is due to the military to state that they never took delight in harassing the country people at the command of a keg-hunter, as they generally nicknamed the gauger. It had been arranged that the vidette at the iron plate should whistle a particular tune the moment that the gauger or a red-coat, or in fact any person whom he did not know, should appear. Accordingly, about eight o'clock in the morning they heard the little fellow in his highest key whistling up that well-known and very significant old Irish air called "Go to the devil an' shake yourself"—which in this case was applied to the gauger in any thing but an allegorical sense.

"Be the pins," which was George's usual oath, "be the pins, Mickey, it's over with us—Pentland's here, for there's the sign."

Mickey paused for a moment and listened very gravely; then squirting out a tobacco spittle, "Take it aisy," said he; "I have half a dozen fires about the hills, any one as like this as your right hand is to your left. I didn't spare trouble, for I knew that if we'd get over *this* day, we'd be out of his power."

"Well, my good lad," said Pentland, addressing the vidette, "what's this fire for?"

"What is it for, is it?"

"Yes; if you don't let me know instantly, I'll blow your brains out, and get you hanged and transported afterwards." This he said with a thundering voice, cocking a large horse pistol at the same time.

"Why, sir," said the boy, "it's watchin' a still I am; but be the hole o' my coat if you tell upon me, it's broilin' upon these coals I'll be soon."

"Where is the still, then? An' the still-house, where is it?"

"Oh, begorra, as to where the still or still-house is, they wouldn't tell *me* that."

"Why, sirra, didn't you say this moment you were watching a still?"

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"I meant, sir," replied the lad, with a face that spoke of pure idiocy, "that it was the gauger I was watchin', an' I was to whistle upon my fingers to let the boy at that fire on the hill there above know that he was comin'."

"Who told you to do so?"

"Little George, sir, an' Mickey M'Quade."

"Ay, ay, right enough there, my lad—two of the most notorious schemers unhanged they are both. But now, like a good boy, tell me the truth, an' I'll give you the price of a pair of shoes. Do you know where the still or still-house is? Because if you do, an' won't tell me, here are the soldiers at hand to make a prisoner of you; an' if they do, all the world can't prevent you from being hanged, drawn, and quartered."

"Oh, bad cess may seize the morsel o' me knows that; but if you'll give me the money, sir, I'll tell you who can bring you to it, for he tould me yestherday mornin' that he knew, an' offered to bring me there last night, if I'd steal him a bottle that my mother keeps the holy water in at home, tal he'd put whiskey in it."

"Well, my lad, who is this boy?"

"Do you know 'Harry Neil, or Mankind,' * sir?"

"I do, my good boy."

"Well, it's a son of his, sir; an' look, sir: do you see the smoke farthest up to the right, sir?"

"To the right? Yes,"

"Well, 'tis there, sir, that Darby Neil is watchin'; and he *says* he knows."

"How long have you been watching here?"

"This is only the third day, sir, for *me;* but the rest, them boys above, has been here a good while."

"Have you seen nobody stirring about the hills since you came?"

* This was a nickname given to Harry, who was a cooper, and made the necessary vessels for distillers.

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"Only once, sir, yestherday, I seen two men, havin' an empty sack or two, runnin' across the hill there above."

At this moment the military came up, for he had himself run forward in advance of them, and he repeated the substance of his conversation with our friend the vidette. Upon examining the stolidity of his countenance, in which there certainly was a woful deficiency of meaning, they agreed among themselves that his appearance justified the truth of the story which he told the gauger, and upon being still further interrogated, they were confirmed that none but a stupid lout like himself would entrust to his keeping any secret worth knowing. They now separated themselves into as many detached parties as there were fires burning on the hills about them, the gauger himself resolving to make for that which Darby Neil had in his keeping, for he could not help thinking that the vidette's story was too natural to be false. They were just in the act of separating themselves to pursue their different routes, when the lad said,

"Look, sir! look, sir! bad scran be from me but there's a still any way. Sure I often seen a still: that's just like the one that Philip Hogan the tinker mended in George Steen's barn."

"Hollo, boys," exclaimed Pentland, "stoop! stoop! they are coming this way, and don't see us: no, hang them, no! they have discovered us now, and are off towards Mossfield. By Jove this will be a bitter trick if they succeed; confound them, they are bent for Ballagh, which is my own property; and may I be hanged but if we do not intercept them it is I myself who will have to pay the fine."

The pursuit instantly commenced with a speed and vigour equal to the ingenuity of this singular act of retaliation on the gauger. Pentland himself being long-winded from much practice in this way, and being further stimulated by the prospective loss which he dreaded, made as beautiful a run of

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it as any man of his years could do. It was all in vain, however. He merely got far enough to see the Still, Head, and Worm, heaved across the march ditch into his own property, and to reflect after seeing it that he was certain to have the double consolation of being made a standing joke of for life, and of paying heavily for the jest out of his own pocket. In the mean time, he was bound of course to seize the still, and report the caption; and as he himself farmed the townland in question, the fine was levied to the last shilling, upon the very natural principle that if he had been sufficiently active and vigilant, no man would have attempted to set up a still so convenient to his own residence and property.

This manœuvre of keeping in reserve an old or second set of apparatus, for the purpose of acting the lapwing and misleading the gauger, was afterwards often practised with success; but the first discoverer of it was undoubtedly Mickey M'Quade, although the honour of the discovery is attributed to his friend George Steen. The matter, however, did not actually end here, for in a few days afterwards some malicious wag—in other words, George himself—had correct information sent to Pentland touching the locality of the cavern and the secret of its entrance. On this occasion the latter brought a larger military party than usual along with him, but it was only to make him feel that he stood in a position if possible still more ridiculous than the first. He found indeed the marks of recent distillation in the place, but nothing else. Every vessel and implement connected with the process had been removed, with the exception of one bottle of whiskey, to which was attached by a bit of twine the following friendly note:—

"Mr. Pentland, Sir—Take this bottle home and drink your own health. You can't do less. It was distilled *under your nose*, the first day you came to look for us, and bottled

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for you while you were speaking to the little boy that made a hare of you. Being distilled then under your nose, let it be drunk in the same place, and don't forget while doing so to drink the health of G. S."

The incident went abroad like wildfire, and was known everywhere. Indeed for a long time it was the standing topic of the parish; and so sharply was it felt by Pentland that he could never keep his temper if asked, "Mr. Pentland, when did you see little George Steen?"—a question to which he was never known to give a civil reply.

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IRISH SUPERSTITIONS.

THE FATE OF FRANK M'KENNA.

We have met and conversed with the various classes that compose general society, and we feel ourselves bound to say that in no instance have we ever met any individual, no matter what his class or rank in life, who was really indifferent to the subject of dreams, fairies, and apparitions. They are topics that interest the imagination in all; and the hoary head of age is inclined with as much interest to a ghost-story, as the young and eager ear of youth, wrought up by all the nimble and apprehensive powers of early fancy. It is true the belief in ghosts is fast disappearing, and that in fairies is already almost gone; but with what new wonders they shall be replaced, it is difficult to say. The physical and natural we suppose will give us enough of the marvellous, without having recourse to the spiritual and supernatural. Steam and gas, if Science advance for another half century at the same rate as she has done in the last, will give sufficient exercise to all our faculties for wondering. We know a man who travelled eighty miles to see whether or not it was a fact that light could be conveyed for miles in a pipe under ground; and this man to our own knowledge possessed the organ of marvellousness to a surprising degree. It is singular, too, that his fear of ghosts was in proportion to this capacious propensity to wonder, as was his disposition when snug in a chimney-corner to talk incessantly of such topics as were calculated to excite it.

In our opinion, ghosts and fairies will be seen wherever they are much talked of, and a belief in their existence

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cultivated and nourished. So long as the powers of the imagination are kept warm and active by exercise, they will create for themselves such images as they are in the habit of conceiving or dwelling upon; and these, when the individual happens to be in the appropriate position, will, even by the mere force of association, engender the particular Eidolon which is predominant in the mind. As an illustration of this I shall mention two cases of apparition which occurred in my native parish, one of which was that of a ghost, and the other of the fairies. To those who have read my "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry," the first which I shall narrate may possess some interest, as being that upon which I founded the tale of the "Midnight Mass." The circumstances are simply these:—

There lived a man named M'Kenna at the hip of one of the mountainous hills which divide the county of Tyrone from that of Monaghan. This M'Kenna had two sons, one of whom was in the habit of tracing hares of a Sunday, whenever there happened to be a fall of snow. His father it seems had frequently remonstrated with him upon what he considered to be a violation of the Lord's day, as well as for his general neglect of mass. The young man, however, though otherwise harmless and inoffensive, was in this matter quite insensible to paternal reproof, and continued to trace whenever the avocations of labour would allow him. It so happened that upon a Christmas morning, I think in the year 1814, there was a deep fall of snow, and young M'Kenna, instead of going to mass, got down his cock-stick—which is a staff much thicker and heavier at one end than at the other—and prepared to set out on his favourite amusement. His father, seeing this, reproved him seriously, and insisted that he should attend prayers. His enthusiasm for the sport, however, was stronger than his love of religion, and he refused to be guided by his father's advice. The old man during the altercation got warm; and on finding that the son obstinately scorned his authority,

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he knelt down and prayed that if the boy persisted in following his own will, he might never return from the mountains unless as a corpse. The imprecation, which was certainly as harsh as it was impious and senseless, might have startled many a mind from a purpose that was, to say the least of it, at variance with religion and the respect due to a father. It had no effect, however, upon the son, who is said to have replied, that whether he ever returned or not, he was determined on going; and go accordingly he did. He was not, however, alone, for it appears that three or four of the neighbouring young men accompanied him. Whether their sport was good or otherwise, is not to the purpose, neither am I able to say; but the story goes that towards the latter part of the day they started a larger and darker hare than any they had ever seen, and that she kept dodging on before them bit by bit, leading them to suppose that every succeeding cast of the cock-stick would bring her down. It was observed afterwards that she also led them into the recesses of the mountains, and that although they tried to turn her course homewards, they could not succeed in doing so. As evening advanced, the companions of M'Kenna began to feel the folly of pursuing her farther, and to perceive the danger of losing their way in the mountains should night or a snow-storm come upon them. They therefore proposed to give over the chase and return home; but M'Kenna would not hear of it. "If you wish to go home, you may," said he; "as for me, I'll never leave the hills till I have her with me." They begged and entreated of him to desist and return, but all to no purpose: he appeared to be what the Scotch call *fey*—that is, to act as if he were moved by some impulse that leads to death, and from the influence of which a man cannot withdraw himself. At length, on finding him invincibly obstinate, they left him pursuing the hare directly into the heart of the mountains, and returned to their respective homes.

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In the meantime, one of the most terrible snow-storms ever remembered in that part of the country came on, and the consequence was, that the self-willed young man, who had equally trampled on the sanctions of religion and parental authority, was given over for lost. As soon as the tempest became still, the neighbours assembled in a body and proceeded to look for him. The snow, however, had fallen so heavily that not a single mark of a footstep could be seen. Nothing but one wide waste of white undulating hills met the eye wherever it turned, and of M'Kenna no trace whatever was visible or could be found. His father now remembering the unnatural character of his imprecation, was nearly distracted; for although the body had not yet been found, still by every one who witnessed the sudden rage of the storm and who knew the mountains, escape or survival was felt to be impossible. Every day for about a week large parties were out among the hill-ranges seeking him, but to no purpose. At length there came a thaw, and his body was found on a snow-wreath, lying in a supine posture within a circle which he had drawn around him with his cock-stick. His prayer-book lay opened upon his mouth, and his hat was pulled down so as to cover it and his face. It is unnecessary to say that the rumour of his death, and of the circumstances under which he left home, created a most extraordinary sensation in the country—a sensation that was the greater in proportion to the uncertainty occasioned by his not having been found either alive or dead. Some affirmed that he had crossed the mountains, and was seen in Monaghan; others, that he had been seen in Clones, in Emyvale, in Fivemiletown; but despite of all these agreeable reports, the melancholy truth was at length made clear by the appearance of the body as just stated.

Now, it so happened that the house nearest the spot where he lay was inhabited by a man named Daly, I think—but of the name I am not certain—who was a herd or care-taker to

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Dr. Porter, then Bishop of Clogher. The situation of this house was the most lonely and desolate-looking that could be imagined. It was at least two miles distant from any human habitation, being surrounded by one wide and dreary waste of dark moor. By this house lay the route of those who had found the corpse, and I believe the door of it was borrowed for the purpose of conveying it home. Be this as it may, the family witnessed the melancholy procession as it passed slowly through the mountains, and when the place and circumstances are all considered, we may admit that to ignorant and superstitious people, whose minds even upon ordinary occasions were strongly affected by such matters, it was a sight calculated to leave behind it a deep, if not a terrible impression. Time soon proved that it did so.

An incident is said to have occurred at the funeral which I have alluded to in the "Midnight Mass," and which is certainly in fine keeping with the wild spirit of the whole melancholy event. When the procession had advanced to a place called Mullaghtinny, a large dark-coloured hare, which was instantly recognised, by those who had been out with him on the hills, as the identical one that led him to his fate, is said to have crossed the road about twenty yards or so before the coffin. The story goes, that a man struck it on the side with a stone, and that the blow, which would have killed any ordinary hare, not only did it no injury, but occasioned a sound to proceed from the body resembling the hollow one emitted by an empty barrel when struck.

In the meantime the interment took place, and the sensation began like every other to die away in the natural progress of time, when, behold, a report ran abroad like wildfire that, to use the language of the people, "Frank M'Kenna was *appearing!*" Seldom indeed was the rumour of an apparition composed of materials so strongly calculated to win popular assent, or to baffle rational investigation. As every man is not

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a Hibbert, or a Nicolai, so will many, until such circumstances are made properly intelligible, continue to yield credence to testimony which would convince the judgment on any other subject. The case in question furnished as fine a specimen of a true ghost-story, freed from any suspicion of imposture or design, as could be submitted to a philosopher; and yet, notwithstanding the array of apparent facts connected with it, nothing in the world is simpler or of easier solution.

One night, about a fortnight after his funeral, the daughter of Daly, the herd, a girl about fourteen, while lying in bed saw what appeared to be the likeness of M'Kenna, who had been lost. She screamed out, and covering her head with the bed-clothes, told her father and mother that Frank M'Kenna was in the house. This alarming intelligence naturally produced great terror; still, Daly, who notwithstanding his belief in such matters possessed a good deal of moral courage, was cool enough to rise and examine the house, which consisted of only one apartment. This gave the daughter some courage, who, on finding that her father could not see him, ventured to look out, and she *then* could see nothing of him herself. She very soon fell asleep, and her father attributed what she saw to fear, or some accidental combination of shadows proceeding from the furniture, for it was a clear moon-light night. The light of the following day dispelled a great deal of their apprehensions, and comparatively little was thought of it until evening again advanced, when the fears of the daughter began to return. They appeared to be prophetic, for she said when night came that she knew he would appear again; and accordingly at the same hour he did so. This was repeated for several successive nights, until the girl, from the very hardihood of terror, began to become so far familiarised to the spectre as to venture to address it.

"In the name of God!" she asked, "what is troubling you,

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or why do you appear to me instead of to some of your own family or relations?"

The ghost's answer alone might settle the question involved in the authenticity of its appearance, being, as it was, an account of one of the most ludicrous missions that ever a spirit was despatched upon.

"I'm not allowed," said he, "to spake to any of my friends, for I parted wid them in anger; but I'm come to tell you that they are quarrellin' about my breeches—a new pair that I got made for Christmas day; an' as I was comin' up to thrace in the mountains, I thought the ould ones 'ud do betther, an' of coorse I didn't put the new pair an me. My raison for appearin'," he added, "is, that you may tell my friends that none of them is to wear them—they must be given in charity."

This serious and solemn intimation from the ghost was duly communicated to the family, and it was found that the circumstances were exactly as it had represented them. This of course was considered as sufficient proof of the truth of its mission. Their conversations now became not only frequent, but quite friendly and familiar. The girl became a favourite with the spectre, and the spectre on the other hand soon lost all his terrors in her eyes. He told her that whilst his friends were bearing home his body, the handspikes or poles on which they carried him had cut his back, and *occasioned him great pain!* The cutting of the back also was known to be true, and strengthened of course the truth and authenticity of their dialogues. The whole neighbourhood was now in a commotion with this story of the apparition, and persons incited by curiosity began to visit the girl in order to satisfy themselves of the truth of what they had heard. Every thing, however, was corroborated, and the child herself, without any symptoms of anxiety or terror, artlessly related her conversations with the spirit. Hitherto their interviews had been all nocturnal, but now that the ghost found his footing made good, he put a

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hardy face on, and ventured to appear by day-light. The girl also fell into states of syncope, and while the fits lasted, long conversations with him upon the subject of God, the blessed Virgin, and Heaven, took place between them. He was certainly an excellent moralist, and gave the best advice. Swearing, drunkenness, theft, and every evil propensity of our nature, were declaimed against with a degree of spectral eloquence quite surprising. Common fame had now a topic dear to her heart, and never was a ghost made more of by his best friends, than she made of him. The whole country was in a tumult, and I well remember the crowds which flocked to the lonely little cabin in the mountains, now the scene of matters so interesting and important. Not a single day passed in which I should think from ten to twenty, thirty, or fifty persons, were not present at these singular interviews. Nothing else was talked of, thought of, and, as I can well testify, dreamt of. I would myself have gone to Daly's were it not for a confounded misgiving I had, that perhaps the ghost might take such a fancy of appearing to *me*, as he had taken to cultivate an intimacy with the girl; and it so happens, that when I see the face of an individual nailed down in the coffin—chilling and gloomy operation!—I experience no particular wish to look upon it again.

Many persons might imagine that the herd's daughter was acting the part of an impostor, by first orginating and then sustaining such a delusion. If any one, however, was an impostor, it was the ghost, and not the girl, as her ill health and wasted cheek might well testify. The appearance of M'Kenna continued to haunt her for months. The reader is aware that he was lost on Christmas day, or rather on the night of it, and I remember seeing her in the early part of the following summer, during which time she was still the victim of a diseased imagination. Every thing in fact that could be done for her was done. They brought her to a priest named

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Donnelly, who lived down at Ballynasaggart, for the purpose of getting her cured, as he had the reputation of performing cures of that kind. They brought her also to the doctors, who also did what they could for her; but all to no purpose. Her fits were longer and of more frequent occurrence; her appetite left her; and ere four months had elapsed, she herself looked as like a spectre as the ghost himself could do for the life of him.

Now, this was a pure case of spectral illusion, and precisely similar to that detailed so philosophically by Nicolai the German bookseller, and to others mentioned by Hibbert. The image of M'Kenna not only appeared to her in day-light at her own house, but subsequently followed her wherever she went; and what proved this to have been the result of diseased organization, produced at first by a heated and excited imagination, was, that, as the story went, she could see him with her eyes shut. Whilst this state of mental and physical feeling lasted, she was a subject of the most intense curiosity. No matter where she went, whether to chapel, to fair, or to market, she was followed by crowds, every one feeling eager to get a glimpse of the girl who had actually seen, and what was more, spoken to a ghost—a live ghost.

Now, here was a young girl of an excitable temperament, and large imagination, leading an almost solitary life amidst scenery of a lonely and desolate character, who happening to be strongly impressed with an image of horror—for surely such was the body of a dead man seen in association with such peculiarly frightful circumstances as filial disobedience and a father's curse were calculated to give it—cannot shake it off, but on the contrary becomes a victim to the disease which it generates. There is not an image which we see in a fever, or a face whether of angel or devil, or an uncouth shape of any kind, that is not occasioned by cerebral excitement, or derangement of the nervous system, analogous to that under

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which Daly's daughter laboured. I saw her several times, and remember clearly that her pale face, dark eye, and very intellectual forehead, gave indications of such a temperament as under her circumstances would be apt to receive strong and fearful impressions from images calculated to excite terror, especially of the supernatural. It only now remains for me to mention the simple method of her cure, which was effected without either priest or doctor. It depended upon a word or two of advice given to her father by a very sensible man, who was in the habit of thinking on these matters somewhat above the superstitious absurdities of the people.

"If you wish your daughter to be cured," said he to her father, "leave the house you are now living in. Take her to some part of the country where she can have companions of her own class and state of life to mingle with; bring her away from the place altogether; for you may rest assured that so long as there are objects before her eyes to remind her of what happened, she will not mend on your hands."

The father, although he sat rent free, took this excellent advice, even at a sacrifice of some comfort: for nothing short of the temptation of easy circumstances could have induced any man to reside in so wild and remote a solitude. In the course of a few days he removed from it with his family, and came to reside amidst the cheerful aspect and enlivening intercourse of human life. The consequences were precisely as the man had told him. In the course of a few weeks the little girl began to find that the visits of the spectre were like those of angels, few and far between. She was sent to school, and what with the confidence derived from human society, and the substitution of new objects and images, she soon perfectly recovered, and ere long was thoroughly set free from the fearful creation of her own brain.

Now, there is scarcely one of the people in my native parish who does not believe that the spirit of this man came back to

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the world, and actually appeared to this little girl. The time, however, is fast coming when these empty bugbears will altogether disappear, and we shall entertain more reverend and becoming notions of God, than to suppose such senseless pranks could be played by the soul of a departed being under his permission. We might as well assert that the imaginary beings which surround the couch of the madman or hypochondriac have a real existence, as those that are conjured up by terror, weak nerves, or impure blood.

The spot where the body of M'Kenna was found is now marked by a little heap of stones, which has been collected since the melancholy event of his death. Every person who passes it throws a stone upon the heap; but why this old custom is practised, or what it means, I do not know, unless it be simply to mark the spot as a visible means of preserving the memory of the occurrence.

Daly's house, the scene of the supposed apparition, is now a shapeless ruin, which could scarcely be seen were it not for the green spot that was once a garden, and which now shines at a distance like an emerald, but with no agreeable or pleasing associations. It is a spot which no solitary school-boy will ever visit, nor indeed would the unflinching believer in the popular nonsense of ghosts wish to pass it without a companion. It is under any circumstances a gloomy and barren place, but when looked upon in connexion with what we have just recited, it is lonely, desolate, and awful.

THE RIVAL KEMPERS.

In the preceding paper we have given an authentic account of what the country folks, and we ourselves at the time, looked upon as a genuine instance of apparition. It appeared to the

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simple-minded to be a clear and distinct case, exhibiting all those minute and subordinate details which, by an arrangement naturally happy, and without concert, go to the formation of truth. There was, however, but one drawback in the matter, and that was the ludicrous and inadequate nature of the moral motive; for what unsteady and derogatory notions of Providence must we not entertain when we see the order and purpose of his divine will so completely degraded and travestied, by the fact of a human soul returning to this earth again, for the ridiculous object of settling the claim to a pair of breeches?

When we see the succession to crowns and kingdoms, and the inheritance to large territorial property and great personal rank, all left so completely undecided that ruin and desolation have come upon nations and families in attempting their adjustment, and when we see a laughable dispute about a pair of breeches settled by a personal revelation from another life, we cannot help asking why the supernatural intimation was permitted in the one case, and not in the other, especially when their relative importance differed so essentially? To follow up this question, however, by insisting upon a principle so absurd, would place Providence in a position so perfectly unreasonable and capricious, that we do not wish to press the inference so far as admission of divine interference in such a manner would justify us in doing.

Having detailed the case of Daly's daughter, however, we take our leave of the girl and the ghost, and turn now to another case, which came under our own observation, in connexion with a man named Frank Martin and the fairies. Before commencing, however, we shall, by way of introduction, endeavour to give our readers a few short particulars as to fairies, their origin, character, and conduct. And as we happen to be on this subject, we cannot avoid regretting that we have not by us copies of two most valuable works upon it,

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from the pen of our learned and admirable countryman, Thomas Keightly. We allude to his Fairy Mythology and his History of the Transmission of Popular Fictions; two works which cannot be perused without delight at the happy manner in which so much learning and amusement, so much solid information, and all that is agreeable in extensive research, are inimitably combined.

With the etymology of the word Fairy we do not intend in a sketch like this to puzzle our readers. It is with the tradition connected with the *thing* we have to do, and not with a variety of learned speculations, which appear, after all, to be yet unsettled. The general opinion, at least in Ireland, is, that during the war of Lucifer in heaven, the angels were divided into three classes. The first class consisted of those faithful spirits who at once, and without hesitation, adhered to the standard of the Omnipotent; the next consisted of those who openly rebelled, and followed the great apostate, sharing eternal perdition along with him; the third and last consisted of those who, during the mighty clash and uproar of the contending hosts, stood timidly aloof, and refused to join either power. These, says the tradition, were hurled out of heaven, some upon earth, and some into the waters of the earth, where they are to remain, ignorant of their fate, until the day of judgment. They know their own power, however, and it is said that nothing but their hopes of salvation prevent them from at once annihilating the whole human race. Such is the broad basis of the general superstition; but our traditional history and conception of the popular fairy falls far short of the historical dignity associated with its origin. The fairy of the people is a diminutive creature, generally dressed in green, irritable, capricious, and quite unsteady in all its principles and dealings with mankind. Sometimes it exhibits singular proofs of ingenuity, but, on the contrary, is frequently over-reached by mere mortal capacity. It is impossible to say, in dealing

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with it, whether its conduct will be found benevolent or otherwise, for it often has happened that its threats of injury have ended in kindness, and its promises of protection terminated in malice and treachery. What is very remarkable, too, is, that it by no means appears to be a mere spirit, but a being with passions, appetites, and other natural wants like ourselves. Indeed, the society or community of fairies appears to be less self-dependent than ours, inasmuch as there are several offices among them which they not only cannot perform, but which render it necessary that we should be stolen and domiciled with them, for the express purpose of performing for them. Like us they are married and given in marriage, and rear families; but whether their offspring are subject to death, is a matter not exactly the clearest. Some traditions affirm that they are, and others that they are as immortal as the angels, although possessing material bodies analogous to our own. The fairy, in fact, is supposed to be a singular mixture of good and evil, not very moral in its actions or objects, often very thievish, and sometimes benevolent, when kindness is least expected from it. It is generally supposed by the people that this singular class of fictitious creatures enjoy, as a kind of right, the richest and best of all the fruits of the earth, and that the top grain of wheat, oats, &c., and the ripest apple, pear, &c., all belong to them, and are taken as their own exclusive property.

They have also other acknowledged rights which they never suffer to be violated with impunity. For instance, wherever a meal is eaten upon the grass in the open field, and the crumbs are not shaken down upon the spot for their use, there they are sure to leave one of their curses, called the *fair gurtha*, or the hungry-grass; for whoever passes over that particular spot for ever afterwards is liable to be struck down with weakness and hunger; and unless he can taste a morsel of bread he neither will nor can recover. The weakness in this instance,

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however, is not natural, for if the person affected but tastes as much meal or flour as would lie on the point of a penknife, he will instantaneously break the spell of the fairies, and recover his former strength. Such spots are said to be generally known by their superior verdure; they are always round, and the diameter of these little circles is seldom more than a single step. The grass which grows upon them is called, as we have said, *hungry-grass*, and is accounted for as we have already stated. Indeed, the walks and haunts of the fairies are to be considered as very sacred and inviolable. For instance, it is dangerous to throw out dirty water after dusk, or before sunrise, lest in doing so you bespatter them, on their passage: for these little gentry are peculiarly fond of cleanliness and neatness, both in dress and person. Bishop Andrews' Lamentation for the Fairies gives as humourous and correct a notion of their personal habits in this way, and their disposition to reward cleanliness in servants, as could be written.

We shall ourselves relate a short anecdote or two touching them, before we come to Frank Martin's case; premising to our readers that we could if we wished fill a volume—ay, three of them—with anecdotes and legends connected with our irritable but good-humoured little friends.

Paddy Corcoran's wife was for several years afflicted with a kind of complaint which nobody could properly understand. She was sick, and she was not sick: she was well and she was not well; she was as ladies wish to be who love their lords, and she was not as such ladies wish to be. In fact, nobody could tell what the matter with her was. She had a gnawing at the heart which came heavily upon her husband; for, with the help of God, a keener appetite than the same gnawing amounted to, could not be met with of a summer's day. The poor woman was delicate beyond belief, and had no appetite at all, so she hadn't, barring a little relish for a mutton-chop, or a "staik," or a bit o' mait, anyway; for sure, God help

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her! she hadn't the laist inclination for the dhry pratie, or the dhrop o' sour butthermilk along wid it, especially as she was so poorly: and, indeed, for a woman in her condition—for, sick as she was, poor Paddy always was made to believe her in *that* condition—but God's will be done! she didn't care. A pratie an' a grain o' salt was as welcome to her—glory be to his name!—as the best roast an' boiled that ever was dressed; an' why not? There was one comfort: she wouldn't be long wid him—long throublin' him; it matthered little what she got; but sure she knew herself, that from the gnawin' at her heart, she could never do good widout the little bit o' mait now and then; an', sure, if her own husband begridged it to her, who else had she a betther right to expect it from?

Well, as we have said, she lay a bedridden invalid for long enough, trying doctors and quacks of all sorts, sexes, and sizes, and all without a farthing's benefit, until at the long run poor Paddy was nearly brought to the last pass, in striving to keep her in "the bit o' mait." The seventh year was now on the point of closing, when one harvest day, as she lay bemoaning her hard condition, on her bed beyond the kitchen fire, a little weeshy woman, dressed in a neat red cloak, comes in, and sitting down by the hearth, says:

"Well, Kitty Corcoran, you've had a long lair of it there on the broad o' yer back for seven years, an' you're jist as far from bein' cured as ever."

"Mavrone, ay," said the other; "in throth that's what I was this minnit thinkin' ov, and a sorrowful thought it is to me."

"It's yer own fau't, thin," says the little woman;" an' indeed, for that matter, it's yer fau't that ever you wor there at all."

"Arra, how is that?" asked Kitty; "sure I wouldn't be here, if I could help it? Do you think it's a comfort or a pleasure to me to be sick and bedridden?"

"No," said the other, "I do not; but I'll tell you the truth: for the last seven years you have been annoyin' us. I am one

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o' the good people; an' as I have a regard for you, I'm come to let you know the raison why you've been sick so long as you are. For all the time you've been ill, if you'll take the thrubble to remimber, your childhre threwn out yer dirty wather afther dusk an' before sunrise, at the very time we're passin' yer door, which we pass twice a day. Now, if you avoid this, if you throw it out in a different place, an' at a different time, the complaint you have will lave you: so will the gnawin' at the heart; an' you'll be as well as ever you wor. If you don't follow this advice, why, remain as you are, an' all the art o' man can't cure you." She then bade her good-bye, and disappeared.

Kitty, who was glad to be cured on such easy terms, immediately complied with the injunction of the fairy; and the consequence was, that the next day she found herself in as good health as ever she enjoyed during her life.

Lanty M'Clusky had married a wife, and, of course, it was necessary to have a house in which to keep her. Now, Lanty had taken a bit of a farm, about six acres; but as there was no house on it, he resolved to build one; and that it might be as comfortable as possible, he selected for the site of it one of those beautiful green circles that are supposed to be the playground of the fairies. Lanty was warned against this; but as he was a headstrong man, and not much given to fear, he said he would not change such a pleasant situation for his house, to oblige all the fairies in Europe. He accordingly proceeded with the building, which he finished off very neatly; and, as it is usual on these occasions to give one's neighbours and friends a house-warming, so, in compliance with this good and pleasant old custom, Lanty having brought home the wife in the course of the day, got a fiddler and a lot of whiskey, and gave those who had come to see him a dance in the evening. This was all very well, and the fun and hilarity were proceeding briskly, when a noise was heard after night

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had set in, like a crushing and straining of ribs and rafters on the top of the house. The folks assembled all listened, and without doubt there was nothing heard but crushing, and heaving, and pushing, and groaning, and panting, as if a thousand little men were engaged in pulling down the roof.

"Come," said a voice, which spoke in a tone of command, "work hard: you know we must have Lanty's house down before midnight."

This was an unwelcome piece of intelligence to Lanty, who, finding that his enemies were such as he could not cope with, walked out, and addressed them as follows:—

"Gintlemen, I humbly ax yer pardon for buildin' on any place belongin' to you; but if you'll have the civilitude to let me alone this night, I'll begin to pull down and remove the house to-morrow morning."

This was followed by a noise like the clapping of a thousand tiny little hands, and a shout of "Bravo, Lanty! build half way between the two Whitethorns above the boreen;" and after another hearty little shout of exultation, there was a brisk rushing noise, and they were heard no more.

The story, however, does not end here; for Lanty, when digging the foundation of his new house, found the full of a *kam** of gold: so that in leaving to the fairies their playground, he became a richer man than ever he otherwise would have been, had he never come in contact with them at all.

There is another instance of their interference mentioned, in which it is difficult to say whether their simplicity or benevolence is the most amusing. In the north of Ireland there are spinning meetings of unmarried females frequently held at the houses of farmers, called *kemps*. Every young woman who has got the reputation of being a quick and expert spinner, attends where the kemp is to be held, at an hour usually before

* *Kam*—a metal vessel in which the peasantry dip rushlights.

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day-light, and on these occasions she is accompanied by her sweetheart or some male relative, who carries her wheel, and conducts her safely across the fields or along the road, as the case may be. A kemp is indeed an animated and joyous scene, and one, besides, which is calculated to promote industry and decent pride. Scarcely anything can be more cheering and agreeable than to hear at a distance, breaking the silence of morning, the light-hearted voices of many girls either in mirth or song, the humming sound of the busy wheels—jarred upon a little, it is true, by the stridulous noise and checkings of the reels, and the voices of the reelers, as they call aloud the checks, together with the name of the girl and the quantity she has spun up to that period; for the contest is generally commenced two or three hours before day-break. This mirthful spirit is also sustained by the prospect of a dance—with which, by the way, every kemp closes; and when the fair victor is declared, she is to be looked upon as the queen of the meeting, and treated with the necessary respect.

But to our tale. Every one knew Shaun Buie M'Gaveran to be the cleanest, best-conducted boy, and the most industrious too, in the whole parish of Faugh-a-ballagh. Hard was it to find a young fellow who could handle a flail, spade, or reaping-hook, in better style, or who could go through his day's work in a more creditable or workman-like manner. In addition to this, he was a fine, well-built, handsome young man as you could meet in a fair; and so, sign was on it, maybe the pretty girls weren't likely to pull each other's caps about him. Shaun, however, was as prudent as he was good-looking; and although he wanted a wife, yet the sorrow one of him but preferred taking a well-handed, smart girl, who was known to be well-behaved and industrious, like himself. Here, however, was where the puzzle lay on him; for instead of one girl of that kind, there were in the neighbourhood no less than a dozen of them—all equally fit and willing to become his wife,

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and all equally good-looking. There were two, however, whom he thought a trifle above the rest; but so nicely balanced were Biddy Corrigan and Sally Gorman, that for the life of him he could not make up his mind to decide between them. Each of them had won her kemp; and it was currently said by them who ought to know, that neither of them could overmatch the other. No two girls in the parish were better respected, or deserved to be so; and the consequence was, they had every one's good word and good wish. Now, it so happened that Shaun had been pulling a cord with each; and as he knew not how to decide between, he thought he would allow them to do that themselves if they could. He accordingly gave out to the neighbours that he would hold a kemp on that day week, and he told Biddy and Sally especially that he had made up his mind to marry whichever of them won the kemp, for he knew right well, as did all the parish, that one of them must. The girls agreed to this very good-humouredly, Biddy telling Sally that she (Sally) would surely win it; and Sally, not to be outdone in civility, telling the same thing to her.

Well, the week was nearly past, there being but two days till that of the kemp, when, about three o'clock, there walks into the house of old Paddy Corrigan, a little woman dressed in high-heeled shoes, and a short red cloak. There was no one in the house but Biddy, at the time, who rose up and placed a chair near the fire, and asked the little red woman to sit down and rest herself. She accordingly did so, and in a short time a lively chat commenced between them.

"So," said the strange woman, "there's to be a great kemp in Shaun Buie M'Gaveran's?"

"Indeed there is that, good woman," replied Biddy, smiling a little, and blushing to the back of that again, because she knew her own fate depended on it.

"And," continued the little woman, "whoever wins the kemp wins a husband?"

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"Ay, so it seems."

"Well, whoever gets Shaun will be a happy woman, for he's the moral of a good boy."

"That's nothing but the truth, anyhow," replied Biddy, sighing, for fear, you may be sure, that she herself might lose him; and indeed a young woman might sigh from many a worse reason. "But," said she, changing the subject, "you appear to be tired, honest woman, an' I think you had better eat a bit, an' take a good drink of *buinnhe ramwher* (thick milk) to help you on your journey."

"Thank you kindly, a colleen," said the woman; "I'll take a bit, if you plase, hopin', at the same time, that you won't be the poorer of it this day twelve months."

"Sure," said the girl, "you know that what we give from kindness, ever an' always leaves a blessing behind it."

"Yes, acushla, when it *is* given from kindness."

She accordingly helped herself to the food that Biddy placed before her, and appeared, after eating, to be very much refreshed.

"Now," said she, rising up, "you're a very good girl, an' if you are able to find out my name before Tuesday morning, the kemp-day, I tell you that you'll win it, and gain the husband."

"Why," said Biddy, "I never saw you before. I don't know who you are, nor where you live; how, then, can I ever find out your name?"

"You never saw me before, sure enough," said the old woman, "an' I tell you that you will never see me again but once; an' yet if you have not my name for me at the close of the kemp, you'll lose all, an' that will leave you a sore heart, for well I know you love Shaun Buie."

So saying, she went away, and left poor Biddy quite cast down at what she had said, for, to tell the truth, she loved Shaun very much, and had no hopes of being able to find out

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the name of the little woman, on which it appeared so much to her depended.

It was very near the same hour of the same day that Sally Gorman was sitting alone in her father's house, thinking of the kemp, when who should walk into her but our friend the little red woman.

"God save you, honest woman," said Sally, "this is a fine day that's in it, the Lord be praised!"

"It is," said the woman, "as fine a day as one could wish for: indeed it is."

"Have you no news on your travels?" asked Sally.

"The only news in the neighbourhood," replied the other, "is this great kemp that's to take place at Shaun Buie M'Gaveran's. They say you're either to win him or lose him then," she added, looking closely at Sally as she spoke.

"I'm not very much afraid of that," said Sally, with confidence; "but even if I do lose him, I may get as good."

"It's not easy gettin' as good," rejoined the old woman, "an' you ought to be very glad to win him, if you can."

"Let me alone for that," said Sally. "Biddy's a good girl, I allow; but as for spinnin', she never saw the day she could leave me behind her. Won't you sit an' rest you?" she added; "maybe you're tired."

"It's time for you to think of it," *thought* the woman, but she spoke nothing: "but," she added to herself on reflection, "it's better late than never—I'll sit awhile, till I see a little closer what she's made of."

She accordingly sat down and chatted upon several subjects, such as young women like to talk about, for about half an hour; after which she arose, and taking her little staff in hand, she bade Sally good-bye, and went her way. After passing a little from the house she looked back, and could not help speaking to herself as follows:—

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"She's smooth and smart,
But she wants the heart;
She's tight and neat,
But she gave no meat."

Poor Biddy now made all possible inquiries about the old woman, but to no purpose. Not a soul she spoke to about her had ever seen or heard of such a woman. She felt very dispirited, and began to lose heart, for there is no doubt that if she missed Shaun it would have cost her many a sorrowful day. She knew she would never get his equal, or at least any one that she loved so well. At last the kemp day came, and with it all the pretty girls of the neighbourhood, to Shaun Buie's. Among the rest, the two that were to decide their right to him were doubtless the handsomest pair by far, and every one admired them. To be sure, it was a blythe and merry place, and many a light laugh and sweet song rang out from pretty lips that day. Biddy and Sally, as every one expected, were far a-head of the rest, but so even in their spinning, that the reelers could not for the life of them declare which was the best. It was neck-and-neck and head-and-head between the pretty creatures, and all who were at the kemp felt themselves wound up to the highest pitch of interest and curiosity to know which of them would be successful.

The day was now more than half gone, and no difference was between them, when, to the surprise and sorrow of every one present, Biddy Corrigan's *heck* broke in two, and so to all appearance ended the contest in favour of her rival; and what added to her mortification, she was as ignorant of the red little woman's name as ever. What was to be done? All that could be done was done. Her brother, a boy of about fourteen years of age, happened to be present when the accident took place, having been sent by his father and mother to bring them word how the match went on between the rival spinsters. Johnny Corrigan was accordingly despatched with

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all speed to Donnel M'Cusker's, the wheelwright, in order to get the heck mended, that being Biddy's last but hopeless chance. Johnny's anxiety that his sister should win was of course very great, and in order to lose as little time as possible he struck across the country, passing through, or rather close by, Kilrudden forth, a place celebrated as a resort of the fairies. What was his astonishment, however, as he passed a white-thorn tree, to hear a female voice singing, in accompaniment to the sound of a spinning-wheel, the following words:—

"There's a girl in this town doesn't know my name;
But my name's Even Trot—Even Trot."

"There's a girl in this town," said the lad, "who's in great distress, for she has broken her heck, and lost a husband. I'm now goin' to Donnel M'Cusker's to get it mended."

"What's her name?" said the little red woman.

"Biddy Corrigan."

The little woman immediately whipped out the heck from her own wheel, and giving it to the boy, desired him to bring it to his sister, and never mind Donnel M'Cusker.

"You have little time to lose," she added, "so go back and give her this; but don't tell her how you got it, nor, above all things, that it was Even Trot that gave it to you."

The lad returned, and after giving the heck to his sister, as a matter of course told her that it was a little red woman called Even Trot that sent it to her, a circumstance which made tears of delight start to Biddy's eyes, for she knew now that Even Trot was the name of the old woman, and having known that, she felt that something good would happen to her. She now resumed her spinning, and never did human fingers let down the thread so rapidly. The whole kemp were amazed at the quantity which from time to time filled her pirn. The hearts of her friends began to rise, and those of Sally's party to sink, as hour after hour she was fast ap-

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proaching her rival, who now spun if possible with double speed on finding Biddy coming up with her. At length they were again even, and just at that moment in came her friend the little red woman, and asked aloud, "is there any one in this kemp that knows my name?" This question she asked three times before Biddy could pluck up courage to answer her. She at last said,

> "There's a girl in this town *does* know your name—
> Your name is Even Trot—Even Trot."

"Ay," said the old woman, "and so it is; and let that name be your guide and your husband's through life. Go steadily along, but let your step be even; stop little; keep always advancing; and you'll never have cause to rue the day that you first saw Even Trot."

We need scarcely add that Biddy won the kemp and the husband, and that she and Shaun lived long and happily together; and I have only now to wish, kind reader, that you and I may live longer and more happily still.

FRANK MARTIN AND THE FAIRIES.

When a superstition is once impressed strongly upon the popular credulity, the fiction always assumes the shape and form which the peculiar imagination of the country is constituted to body forth. This faculty depends so much on climate, temperament, religion, and occupation, that the notions entertained of supernatural beings, though generally based upon one broad feature peculiar to all countries, differ so essentially respecting the form, character, habits, and powers of these beings, that they appear to have been drawn from sources widely removed.

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To an inquiring mind there can be no greater proof than this of their being nothing but the creations of our own brain, and of assuming that shape only which has uniformly been impressed upon our imagination at the precise period of life when such impressions are strongest and most permanent, and the reason which ought to combat and investigate them least capable of doing so. If these inane bugbears possessed the consistence of truth and reality, their appearance to mankind would be always uniform, unchangeable, and congruous; but they are beheld, so to speak, through different prejudices and impressions, and consequently change with the media through which they are seen, just as light assumes the hue of the glass through which it passes. Hence their different shape, character, and attributes in different countries, and the frequent absence of rational analogy with respect to them even in the same.

The force of imagination alone is capable of conjuring up and shaping out that which never had existence, and that too with as much apparent distinctness and truth as if it were real. Go to the lunatic asylum or the mad-house, and there it may be seen in all its strong delusion and positive terror.

Before I close this portion of my little disquisition, I shall relate an anecdote connected with it, of which I myself was the subject. Some years ago I was seized with typhus fever of so terrific a character, that for a long time I lay in a state hovering between life and death, unconscious as a log, without either hope or fear. At length a crisis came, and, aided by the strong stamina of an unbroken constitution, I began to recover, and every day to regain my consciousness more and more. As yet, however, I was very far from being out of danger, for I felt the malady to be still so fiery and oppressive, that I was not surprised when told that the slightest mistake either in my medicine or regimen would have brought on a relapse. At all events, thank God, my recovery advanced; but,

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at the same time, the society that surrounded me was wild and picturesque in the highest degree. Never indeed was such a combination of the beautiful and hideous seen, unless in the dreams of a feverish brain like mine, or the distorted reason of a madman. At one side of my bed, looking in upon me with a most hellish and satanic leer, was a face, compared with which the vulgar representations of the devil are comeliness itself, whilst on the other was a female countenance beaming in beauty that was ethereal—angelic. Thus, in fact, was my whole bed surrounded; for they stood as thickly as they could, sometimes flitting about and seeming to crush and jostle one another, but never leaving my bed for a moment. Here were the deformed features of a dwarf, there an angel apparently fresh from heaven; here was a gigantic demon with his huge mouth placed longitudinally in his face, and his nose across it, whilst the Gorgon-like coxcomb grinned as if he were vain, and had cause to be vain, of his beauty. This fellow annoyed me much, and would, I apprehended, have done me an injury, only for the angel on the other side. He made perpetual attempts to come at me, but was as often repulsed by that seraphic creature. Indeed, I feared none of them so much as I did the Gorgon, who evidently had a design on me, and would have rendered my situation truly pitiable, were it not for the protection of the seraph, who always succeeded in keeping him aloof. At length he made one furious rush as if he meant to pounce upon me, and in self-preservation I threw my right arm to the opposite side, and, grasping the seraph by the nose, I found I had caught my poor old nurse by that useful organ, while she was in the act of offering me a drink. For several days I was in this state, the victim of images produced by disease, and the inflammatory excitement of brain consequent upon it. Gradually, however, they began to disappear, and I felt manifest relief, for they were succeeded by impressions as amusing now as the former had been distressing. I imagined

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that there was a serious dispute between my right foot and my left, as to which of them was entitled to precedency; and, what was singular, my right leg, thigh, hand, arm and shoulder, most unflinchingly supported the right foot, as did the other limbs the left. The head alone, with an impartiality that did it honour, maintained a strict neutrality. The truth was, I imagined that all my limbs were endowed with a consciousness of individual existence, and I felt quite satisfied that each and all of them possessed the faculty of reason. I have frequently related this anecdote to my friends; but, I know not how it happened, I never could get them to look upon it in any other light than as a specimen of that kind of fiction which is indulgently termed "drawing the long bow." It is, however, as true as that I now exist, and relate the fact; and, what is more, the arguments which I am about to give are substantially the same that were used by the rival claimants and their respective supporters. The discussion, I must observe, was opened by the left foot, as being the discontented party, and, like all discontented parties, its language was so very violent, that, had its opinions prevailed, there is no doubt but they would have succeeded in completely overturning my constitution.

Left foot. Brother (addressing the right with a great show of affection, but at the same time with a spasmodic twitch of strong discontentment in the big toe), Brother, I don't know how it is that you have during our whole lives always taken the liberty to consider yourself a better foot than I am; and I would feel much obliged to you if you would tell me why it is that you claim this superiority over me. Are we not both equal in every thing?

Right foot. Be quiet, my dear brother. We *are* equal in every thing, and why, therefore, are you discontented?

Left foot. Because you presume to consider yourself the better and more useful foot.

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Right foot. Let us not dispute, my dear brother: each is equally necessary to the other. What could I do without *you?* Nothing, or at least very little; and what could you do without *me?* Very little indeed. We were not made to quarrel.

Left foot (*very hot*). I am not disposed to quarrel, but I trust you will admit that I am as good as you, every way your equal, and, begad, in many things your superior. Do you hear that? I am not disposed to quarrel, you rascal, and how dare you say so?

Here there was a strong sensation among all the right members, who felt themselves insulted through this outrage offered to their chief supporter.

Right foot. Since you choose to insult me without provocation, I must stand upon my right——

Left (*shoving off to a distance*). RIGHT!—there, again, what right have you to be termed "*right*" any more than I?—("Bravo!—go it, *Left;* pitch into him; we are equal to him and his," from the friends of the Left. The matter was now likely to become serious, and to end in a row.)

"What's the matter there below?" said the Head; "don't be fools, and make yourselves ridiculous. What would either of you be with a crutch or a cork-leg? which is only another name for a wooden shoe any day."

Right foot. Since he provokes me, I tell him, that ever since the world began, the prejudice of mankind in all nations has been in favour of the right foot and the right hand. (Strong sensation among the left members). Surely he ought not to be ignorant of the proverb, which says, when a man is peculiarly successful in any thing he undertakes, "that man knew how to go about it—*he put the right foot foremost!*" (Cheers from the right party).

Left. That's mere special pleading—the right foot there does not mean you, because you happen to be termed such; but it means the foot which, from its position under the circum-

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stances, happens to be the proper one. (Loud applause from the left members).

Right foot. You know you are weak and feeble and awkward when compared to me, and can do little of yourself. (Hurra! that's a poser!)

Left. Why, certainly, I grant I am the gentleman, and that you are very useful to me, you plebeian, ("Bravo!" from the left hand; "ours is the aristocratic side—hear the operatives! Come, hornloof, what have you to say to that?")

Right hand (*addressing his opponent*). You may be the aristocratic party if you will, but we are the useful. Who are the true defenders of the constitution, you poor sprig of nobility?

Left hand. The heart is with us, the seat and origin of life and power. *Can you* boast as much? (Loud cheers).

Right foot. Why, have you never heard it said of an excellent and worthy man—a fellow of the right sort, a trump—as a mark of his sterling qualities, "his heart's in the *right* place!" How then can it be in the *left?* (Much applause).

Left. Which is an additional proof that mine is *that* place and not yours. Yes, you rascal, we *have* the heart, and you cannot deny it.

Right. We admit he resides with you, but it is merely because you are the weaker side, and require his protection. The best part of his energies are given to us, and we are satisfied.

Left. You admit, then, that our party keeps yours in power, and why not at once give up your right to precedency?—why not resign?

Right. Let us put it to the vote.

Left. With all my heart.

It was accordingly put to the vote; but on telling the house, it was found that the parties were equal. Both then appealed very strenuously to Mr. Speaker, the Head, who, after having heard their respective arguments, shook himself very gravely,

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and informed them (much after the manner of Sir Roger De Coverley) that "much might be said on both sides." "But one thing," said he, "I beg both parties to observe, and very seriously to consider. In the first place, there would be none of this nonsense about precedency, were it not for the feverish and excited state in which you all happen to be at present. If you have common sense enough to wait until you all get somewhat cooler, there is little doubt but you will feel that you cannot do without each other. As for myself, as I said before, I give no specific opinion upon disputes which would never have taken place were it not for the heat of feeling which is between you. I know that much might and has been said upon both sides; but as for me, I nod significantly to both parties, and say nothing. One thing, however, I do say, and it is this—take care, you *right foot*, and you, *left foot*, that by pursuing this senseless quarrel too far it may not happen that you will both get stretched and tied up together in a wooden surtout, when precedency will be out of the question, and nothing but a most pacific stillness shall remain between you for ever. I shake, and have concluded."

Now, seriously, this case, which as an illustration of my argument possesses a good deal of physiological interest, is another key to the absurd doctrine of apparitions. Here was I at the moment strongly and seriously impressed with a belief that a quarrel was taking place between my two feet about the right of going foremost. Nor was this absurdity all. I actually believed for the time that all my limbs were endowed with separate life and reason. And why? All simply because my whole system was in a state of unusually strong excitement, and the nerves and blood stimulated by disease into a state of derangement. Such, in fact, is the condition in which every one must necessarily be who thinks he sees a spirit; and this, which is known to be an undeniable fact, being admitted, it follows of course that the same causes will, other things being

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alike, produce the same effects. For instance, does not the terror of an apparition occasion a violent and increased action of the heart and vascular system, similar to that of fever? Does not the very hair stand on end, not merely when the imaginary ghost is seen, but when the very apprehension of it is strong? Is not the action of the brain, too, accelerated in proportion to that of the heart, and the nervous system in proportion to that of both? What, then, is this but a fever for the time being, which is attended by the very phantasms the fear of which created it; for in this case it so happens that the cause and effect mutually reproduce each other.

Hibbert mentions a case of imagination, which in a man is probably the strongest and most unaccountable on record. It is that of a person—an invalid—who imagined that at a certain hour of the day a carter or drayman came into his bedroom, and, uncovering him, inflicted several heavy stripes upon his body with the thong of his whip; and such was the power of fancy here, that the marks of the lash were visible in black and blue streaks upon his flesh. I am inclined to think, however, that this stands very much in need of confirmation.

I have already mentioned a case of spectral illusion which occurred in my native parish. I speak of Daly's daughter, who saw what she imagined to be the ghost of M'Kenna, who had been lost among the mountains. I shall now relate another, connected with the fairies, of which I also was myself an eye-witness. The man's name, I think, was Martin, and he followed the thoughtful and somewhat melancholy occupation of a weaver. He was a bachelor, and wrought journey-work in every farmer's house where he could get employment; and notwithstanding his supernatural vision of the fairies, he was considered to be both a quick and an excellent workman. The more sensible of the country people said he was deranged, but the more superstitious of them maintained that he had a *Lianhan Shee*, and saw them against his will. The Lianhan Shee

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is a malignant fairy, which, by a subtle compact made with any one whom it can induce by the fairest promises to enter into, secures a mastery over them by inducing its unhappy victims to violate it; otherwise, it is and must be like the oriental genie, their slave and drudge, to perform such tasks as they wish to impose upon it. It will promise endless wealth to those whom it is anxious to subjugate to its authority, but it is at once so malignant and ingenious, that the party entering into the contract with it is always certain by its manœuvres to break through his engagement, and thus become slave in his turn. Such is the nature of this wild and fearful superstition, which I think is fast disappearing, and is now but rarely known in the country.

Martin was a thin pale man, when I saw him, of a sickly look, and a constitution naturally feeble. His hair was a light auburn, his beard mostly unshaven, and his hands of a singular delicacy and whiteness, owing, I dare say, as much to the soft and easy nature of his employment, as to his infirm health. In every thing else he was as sensible, sober, and rational as any other man; but on the topic of fairies, the man's mania was peculiarly strong and immoveable. Indeed, I remember that the expression of his eyes was singularly wild and hollow, and his long narrow temples sallow and emaciated.

Now, this man did not lead an unhappy life, nor did the malady he laboured under seem to be productive of either pain or terror to him, although one might be apt to imagine otherwise. On the contrary, he and the fairies maintained the most friendly intimacy, and their dialogues—which I fear were wofully one-sided ones—must have been a source of great pleasure to him, for they were conducted with much mirth and laughter, on his part at least.

"Well, Frank, when did you see the fairies?"

"Whist! there's two dozen of them in the shop (the weaving shop) this minute. There's a little ould fellow sittin' on the

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top of the sleys, an' all to be rocked while I'm weavin.' The sorrow's in them, but they're the greatest little skamers alive, so they are. See, there's another of them at my dressin' noggin.* Go out o' that, you *shingaun;* or, bad cess to me, if you don't, but I'll lave you a mark. Ha! cut, you thief you!"

"Frank, aren't you afeard o' them?"

"Is it me? Arra, what 'ud I be afeard o' them for? Sure they have no power over me."

"And why haven't they, Frank?"

"Becaise I was baptized against them."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why, the priest that christened me was tould by my father to put in the prayer against the fairies—an' a priest can't refuse it when he's axed—an' he did so. Begorra, it's well for me that he did—(let the tallow alone, you little glutton—see, there's a weeny thief o' them aitin' my tallow)—becaise, you see, it was their intention to make me king o' the fairies."

"Is it possible?"

"Devil a lie in it. Sure you may ax them, an' they'll tell you."

"What size are they, Frank?"

"Oh, little wee fellows, with green coats an' the purtiest little shoes ever you seen. There's two o' them—both ould acquaintances o' mine—runnin' along the yarn-beam. That ould fellow with the bob-wig is called Jim Jam, an' the other chap with the three-cocked hat is called Nickey Nick. Nickey plays the pipes. Nickey, give us a tune, or I'll malivogue you—come now, 'Lough Erne Shore.' Whist, now—listen!"

The poor fellow, though weaving as fast as he could all the time, yet bestowed every possible mark of attention to the music, and seemed to enjoy it as much as if it had been real.

* The dressings are a species of sizy flummery, which is brushed into the yarn to keep the thread round and even, and to prevent it from being frayed by the friction of the reed.

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But who can tell whether that which we look upon as a privation may not after all be a fountain of increased happiness, greater perhaps than any which we ourselves enjoy? I forget who the poet is who says—

> "Mysterious are thy laws;
> The vision's finer than the view;
> Her landscape Nature never drew
> So fair as Fancy draws."

Many a time, when a mere child not more than six or seven years of age, have I gone as far as Frank's weaving-shop, in order, with a heart divided between curiosity and fear, to listen to his conversation with the good people. From morning till night his tongue was going almost as incessantly as his shuttle; and it was well known that at night, whenever he awoke out of his sleep, the first thing he did was to put out his hand and push them as it were off his bed.

"Go out o' this, you thieves you—go out o' this, now, an' let me alone. Nickey, is this any time to be playin' the pipes, and me wants to sleep? Go off, now—troth if yez do, you'll see what I'll give yez to-morrow. Sure I'll be makin' new dressin's; and if yez behave dacently, maybe I'll lave yez the scrapin' o' the pot. There now. Och! poor things, they're dacent crathurs. Sure they're all gone barrin' poor Red-cap, that doesn't like to lave me." And then the harmless monomaniac would fall back into what we trust was an innocent slumber.

About this time there was said to have occurred a very remarkable circumstance, which gave poor Frank a vast deal of importance among the neighbours. A man named Frank Thomas, the same in whose house Mickey M'Rorey held the first dance at which I ever saw him, as detailed in a former sketch—this man, I say, had a child sick, but of what complaint I cannot now remember, nor is it of any importance. One of the gables of Thomas's house was built against, or rather into, a Forth or Rath called Towny, or properly Tonagh Forth.

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It was said to be haunted by the fairies, and what gave it a character peculiarly wild in my eyes, was, that there were on the southern side of it two or three little green mounds, which were said to be the graves of unchristened children, over which it was considered dangerous and unlucky to pass. At all events, the season was mid-summer; and one evening about dusk, during the illness of the child, the noise of a hand-saw was heard upon the Forth. This was considered rather strange, and after a little time, a few of those who were assembled at Frank Thomas's, went to see who it could be that was sawing in such a place, or what they could be sawing at so late an hour, for every one knew that nobody in the whole country about them would dare to cut down the few white-thorns that grew upon the Forth. On going to examine, however, judge of their surprise, when, after surrounding and searching the whole place, they could discover no trace of either saw or sawyer. In fact, with the exception of themselves, there was no one, either natural or supernatural, visible. They then returned to the house, and had scarcely sat down, when it was heard again within ten yards of them. Another examination of the premises took place, but with equal success. Now, however, while standing on the Forth, they heard the sawing in a little hollow, about a hundred and fifty yards below them, which was completely exposed to their view, but they could see nobody. A party of them immediately went down to ascertain, if possible, what this singular noise and invisible labour could mean; but on arriving at the spot, they heard the sawing, to which were now added hammering and the driving of nails, upon the Forth above, whilst those who stood on the Forth continued to hear it in the hollow. On comparing notes, they resolved to send down to Billy Nelson's for Frank Martin, a distance of only about eighty or ninety yards. He was soon on the spot, and without a moment's hesitation solved the enigma.

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"'Tis the fairies," said he. "I see them, and busy crathurs they are."

"But what are they sawing, Frank?"

"They are makin' a child's coffin," he replied; "they have the body already made, an' they're now nailin' the lid together."

That night the child certainly died, and the story goes, that on the second evening afterwards, the carpenter who was called upon to make the coffin brought a table out from Thomas's house to the forth, as a temporary bench; and it is said that the sawing and hammering necessary for the completion of his task were precisely the same which had been heard the evening but one before—neither more nor less. I remember the death of the child myself, and the making of its coffin, but I think that the story of the supernatural carpenter was not heard in the village for some months after its interment.

Frank had every appearance of a hypochondriac about him. At the time I saw him, he might be about thirty-four years of age, but I do not think, from the debility of his frame and infirm health, that he has been alive for several years. He was an object of considerable interest and curiosity, and often have I been present when he was pointed out to strangers as "the man that could see the good people." With respect to his solution of the supernatural noise, that is easily accounted for. This superstition of the coffin-making is a common one, and to a man like him, whose mind was familiar with it, the illness of the child would naturally suggest the probability of its death, which he immediately associated with the imagery and agents to be found in his unhappy malady.

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A LEGEND OF KNOCKMANY.

WHAT Irish man, woman, or child, has not heard of our renowned Hibernian Hercules, the great and glorious Fin M'Coul? Not one, from Cape Clear to the Giant's Causeway, nor from that back again to Cape Clear. And by the way, speaking of the Giant's Causeway brings me at once to the beginning of my story. Well, it so happened that Fin and his gigantic relatives were all working at the Causeway, in order to make a bridge, or what was still better, a good stout pad-road, across to Scotland; when Fin, who was very fond of his wife Oonagh, took it into his head that he would go home and see how the poor woman got on in his absence. To be sure, Fin was a true Irishman, and so the sorrow thing in life brought him back, only to see that she was snug and comfortable, and, above all things, that she got her rest well at night; for he knew that the poor woman, when he was with her, used to be subject to nightly qualms and configurations, that kept him very anxious, decent man, striving to keep her up to the good spirits and health that she had when they were first married. So, accordingly, he pulled up a fir-tree, and, after lopping off the roots and branches, made a walking-stick of it, and set out on his way to Oonagh.

Oonagh, or rather Fin, lived at this time on the very tip-top of Knockmany Hill, which faces a cousin of its own, called Cullamore, that rises up, half-hill, half-mountain, on the opposite side—east-east by south, as the sailors say, when they wish to puzzle a landsman.

Now, the truth is, for it must come out, that honest Fin's affection for his wife, though cordial enough in itself, was by no manner or means the real cause of his journey home. There was at that time another giant, named Cucullin—some

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say he was Irish, and some say he was Scotch—but whether Scotch or Irish, sorrow doubt of it but he was a *targer*. No other giant of the day could stand before him; and such was his strength, that, when well vexed, he could give a stamp that shook the country about him.* The fame and name of him went far and near; and nothing in the shape of a man, it was said, had any chance with him in a fight. Whether the story

* The subjoined note by the Messrs. Chambers, in whose admirable Journal the above Legend appeared, exhibits a most extraordinary coincidence between my illustration of Cucullin's strength and that of the giant alluded to by the Messrs. Chambers:—

"The above paper gives a good idea of the strange hues which the national humour and fancy have thrown over most of the early popular legends of Ireland. Fin or Fion M'Coul is the same half-mythic being who figures as Fingal in Macpherson's Ossian's Poems. He was probably a distinguished warrior in some early stage of the history of Ireland; different authorities place him in the fifth and the ninth centuries. Whatever his real age, and whatever his real qualities, he was afterwards looked back to as a giant of immense size and strength, and became the subject of numerous wild and warlike legends both in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland. Our Lowland poets of the middle ages give incontestible evidence of the great fame then enjoyed by both Fingal and Gaul the son of Morni. Barbour, for instance, in 1375, represents his hero Robert Bruce as making allusion to these two personages at the skirmish in Glendochart. Gavin Douglas, who died in 1522, introduces their names into his poem *the Palace of Honour*:

"'Great Gow MacMorn, and Fin MacCowl, and how
They should be gods in Ireland, as they say.'

"Another Scottish poem, of obscure authorship, but of the same age as the above, entitled *An Interlude of the Droich's* [Dwarf's] *Part of the Play*, conveys the extravagant popular notions of the day respecting the vast stature of not only Fin and Gaul, but of Fin's wife. Of Fin it says—

"'Ay when he danced, the warld wad shog—
* * * * *
——After he grew mickle at fouth,
Eleven mile wide was his mouth,
His teeth were ten miles square;
He wad upon his taes stand,
And tak the sterns down with his hand,
And set them in a gold garland,
Above his wife's hair.'

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is true or not, I cannot say, but the report went that, by one blow of his fist, he flattened a thunderbolt, and kept it in his pocket, in the shape of a pancake, to show to all his enemies when they were about to fight him. Undoubtedly he had given every giant in Ireland a considerable beating, barring Fin M'Coul himself; and he swore, by the solemn contents of Moll Kelly's Primer, that he would never rest, night or day, winter or summer, till he would serve Fin with the same sauce, if he could catch him. Fin, however, who no doubt was the cock of the walk on his own dunghill, had a strong disinclination to meet a giant who could make a young earthquake, or flatten a thunderbolt when he was angry; so he accordingly kept dodging about from place to place, not much to his credit as a Trojan, to be sure, whenever he happened to get the hard word that Cucullin was on the scent of him. This, then, was the marrow of the whole movement, although he put it on his anxiety to see Oonagh; and I am not saying but there was some truth in that too. However, the short and the long of it was, with reverence be it spoken, that he heard Cucullin was coming to the Causeway to have a trial of strength with him; and he was naturally enough seized, in consequence, with a very warm and sudden fit of affection for his wife, poor woman,

"Of the wife it may be enough to say—

"'For cauld she took the fever-tertan,*
For all the claith in France and Bertan†
Wad not be till her leg a garten,
Though she was young and tender.'

"In Irish traditionary narrative, as appears from Mr. Carleton's present sketch, Fin and his dame are kept within something comparatively moderate as respects bulk and strength, at the same time that enough of the giant is retained to contrast ludicrously with the modern and natural feelings assigned to them, and the motives and maxims on which they and their enemy Cucullin are represented as acting."

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* Tertian fever. † Britain.

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who was delicate in her health, and leading, besides, a very lonely uncomfortable life of it (he assured them), in his absence. He accordingly pulled up the fir-tree, as I said before, and having *snedded* it into a walking-stick, set out on his affectionate travels to see his darling Oonagh on the top of Knockmany, by the way.

In truth, to state the suspicions of the country at the time, the people wondered very much why it was that Fin selected such a windy spot for his dwelling-house, and they even went so far as to tell him as much.

"What can you mane, Mr. M'Coul," said they, "by pitching your tent upon the top of Knockmany, where you never are without a breeze, day or night, winter or summer, and where you're often forced to take your nightcap* without either going to bed or turning up your little finger; ay, an' where, besides this, there's the sorrow's own want of water?"

"Why," said Fin, "ever since I was the height of a round tower, I was known to be fond of having a good prospect of my own; and where the dickens, neighbours, could I find a better spot for a good prospect than the top of Knockmany? As for water, I am sinking a pump,† and, plase goodness, as soon as the Causeway's made, I intend to finish it."

Now, this was more of Fin's philosophy; for the real state of the case was, that he pitched upon the top of Knockmany in order that he might be able to see Cucullin coming towards the house, and, of course, that he himself might go to look after his distant transactions in other parts of the country, rather than—but no matter—we do not wish to be too hard on Fin.

* A common name for the cloud or rack that hangs, as a forerunner of wet weather, about the peak of a mountain.

† There is upon the top of this hill an opening that bears a very strong resemblance to the crater of an extinct volcano. There is also a stone, upon which, I have heard the Rev. Sidney Smith, F. T. C., now rector of the adjoining parish, say that he found Ogham characters; and, if I do not mistake, I think he took a *fac-simile* of them.

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All we have to say is, that if he wanted a spot from which to keep a sharp look-out—and, between ourselves, he did want it grievously—barring Slieve Croob, or Slieve Donard, or its own cousin, Cullamore, he could not find a neater or more convenient situation for it in the sweet and sagacious province of Ulster.

"God save all here!" said Fin, good humouredly, on putting his honest face into his own door.

"Musha Fin, avick, an' you're welcome home to your own Oonagh, you darlin' bully." Here followed a smack that is said to have made the waters of the lake at the bottom of the hill curl, as it were, with kindness and sympathy.

"Faith," said Fin, "beautiful; an' how are you, Oonagh—and how did you sport your figure during my absence, my bilberry?"

"Never a merrier—as bouncing a grass widow as ever there was in sweet 'Tyrone among the bushes.'"

Fin gave a short good-humoured cough, and laughed most heartily, to show her how much he was delighted that she made herself happy in his absence.

"An' what brought you home so soon, Fin?" said she.

"Why, avourneen," said Fin, putting in his answer in the proper way, "never the thing but the purest of love and affection for yourself. Sure you know that's truth, any how, Oonagh."

Fin spent two or three happy days with Oonagh, and felt himself very comfortable, considering the dread he had of Cucullin. This, however, grew upon him so much that his wife could not but perceive that something lay on his mind which he kept altogether to himself. Let a woman alone, in the meantime, for ferreting or wheedling a secret out of her good man, when she wishes. Fin was a proof of this.

"It's this Cucullin," said and, "that's troubling me. When the fellow gets angry, and begins to stamp, he'll shake you a

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whole townland; and it's well known that he can stop a thunderbolt, for he always carries one about him in the shape of a pancake, to show to any one that might misdoubt it."

As he spoke, he clapped his thumb in his mouth, which he always did when he wanted to prophesy, or to know any thing that happened in his absence; and the wife, who knew what he did it for, said, very sweetly,

"Fin, darling, I hope you don't bite your thumb at me, dear?"

"No," said Fin; "but I bite my thumb, acushla," said he.

"Yes, jewel; but take care and don't draw blood," said she. "Ah, Fin! don't, my bully—don't."

"He's coming," said Fin; "I see him below Dungannon."

"Thank goodness, dear! an' who is it, avick? Glory be to God!"

"That baste Cucullin," replied Fin; "and how to manage I don't know. If I run away, I am disgraced; and I know that sooner or later I must meet him, for my thumb tells me so."

"When will he be here?" said she.

"To-morow, about two o'clock," replied Fin, with a groan.

"Well, my bully, don't be cast down," said Oonagh; "depend on me, and maybe I'll bring you better out of this scrape than ever you could bring yourself, by your rule o' thumb."

This quieted Fin's heart very much, for he knew that Oonagh was hand and glove with the fairies; and, indeed, to tell the truth, she was supposed to be a fairy herself. If she was, however, she must have been a kind-hearted one; for, by all accounts, she never did any thing but good in the neighbourhood.

Now, it so happened that Oonagh had a sister named Granua, living opposite them, on the very top of Cullamore, which I have mentioned already, and this Granua was quite as powerful as herself. The beautiful valley that lies between them is not

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more than about three or four miles broad, so that of a summer's evening, Granua and Oonagh were able to hold many an agreeable conversation across it, from the one hill-top to the other. Upon this occasion, Oonagh resolved to consult her sister as to what was best to be done in the difficulty that surrounded them.

"Granua," said she, "are you at home?"

"No," said the other; "I'm picking bilberries in Althadhawan" (*Anglicé*, the Devil's Glen).

"Well," said Oonagh, "get up to the top of Cullamore, look about you, and then tell us what you see."

"Very well," replied Granua, after a few minutes, "I am there now."

"What do you see?" asked the other.

"Goodness be about us!" exclaimed Granua, "I see the biggest giant that ever was known, coming up from Dungannon."

"Ay," said Oonagh, "there's our difficulty. That giant is the great Cucullin; and he's now comin' up to leather Fin. What's to be done?"

"I'll call to him," she replied, "to come up to Cullamore, and refresh himself, and maybe that will give you and Fin time to think of some plan to get yourselves out of the scrape. "But," she proceeded, "I'm short of butter, having in the house only half a dozen firkins, and as I'm to have a few giants and giantesses to spend the evenin' with me, I'd feel thankful, Oonagh, if you'd throw me up fifteen or sixteen tubs, or the largest miscaun you have got, and you'll oblige me very much."

"I'll do that with a heart and a half," replied Oonagh; "and, indeed, Granua, I feel myself under great obligations to you for your kindness in keeping him off of us, till we see what can be done; for what would become of us all if any thing happened Fin, poor man?"

She accordingly got the largest miscaun of butter she had—

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which might be about the weight of a couple dozen millstones, so that you may easily judge of its size—and calling up to her sister, "Granua," said she, "are you ready? I'm going to throw you up a miscaun, so be prepared to catch it."

"I will," said the other; "a good throw now, and take care it does not fall short."

Oonagh threw it; but in consequence of her anxiety about Fin and Cucullin, she forgot to say the charm that was to send it up, so that, instead of reaching Cullamore, as she expected, it fell about half way between the two hills, at the edge of the Broad Bog near Augher.

"My curse upon you!" she exclaimed; "you've disgraced me. I now change you into a grey stone. Lie there as a testimony of what has happened; and may evil betide the first living man that will ever attempt to remove or injure you!"

And, sure enough, there it lies to this day, with the mark of the four fingers and thumb imprinted in it, exactly as it came out of her hand.

"Never mind," said Granua; "I must only do the best I can with Cucullin. If all fail, I'll give him a cast of heather broth to keep the wind out of his stomach, or a panada of oak-bark to draw it in a bit; but, above all things, think of some plan to get Fin out of the scrape he's in, otherwise he's a lost man. You know you used to be sharp and ready-witted; and my own opinion, Oonagh, is, that it will go hard with you, or you'll outdo Cucullin yet."

She then made a high smoke on the top of the hill, after which she put her finger in her mouth, and gave three whistles, and by that Cucullin knew he was invited to Cullamore—for this was the way that the Irish long ago gave a sign to all strangers and travellers, to let them know they were welcome to come and take share of whatever was going.

In the meantime, Fin was very melancholy, and did not know what to do, or how to act at all. Cucullin was an ugly

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customer, no doubt, to meet with; and, moreover, the idea of the confounded "cake" aforesaid, flattened the very heart within him. What chance could he have, strong and brave though he was, with a man who could, when put into a passion, walk the country into earthquakes and knock thunderbolts into pancakes? The thing was impossible; and Fin knew not on what hand to turn him. Right or left—backward or forward—where to go he could form no guess whatsoever.

"Oonagh," said he, "can you do nothing for me? Where's all your invention? Am I to be skivered like a rabbit before your eyes, and to have my name disgraced for ever in the sight of all my tribe, and me the best man among them? How am I to fight this man-mountain—this huge cross between an earthquake and a thunderbolt?—with a pancake in his pocket that was once"——

"Be easy, Fin," replied Oonagh; "troth, I'm ashamed of you. Keep your toe in your pump, will you? Talking of pancakes, maybe we'll give him as good as any he brings with him—thunderbolt or otherwise. If I don't treat him to as smart feeding as he's got this many a day, never trust Oonagh again. Leave him to me, and do just as I bid you."

This relieved Fin very much; for, after all, he had great confidence in his wife, knowing, as he did, that she had got him out of many a quandary before. The present, however, was the greatest of all; but still he began to get courage, and was able to eat his victuals as usual. Oonagh then drew the nine woollen threads of different colours, which she always did to find out the best way of succeeding in any thing of importance she went about. She then platted them into three plats with three colours in each, putting one on her right arm, one round her heart, and the third round her right ankle, for then she knew that nothing could fail with her that she undertook.

Having every thing now prepared, she sent round to the neighbours and borrowed one-and-twenty iron griddles, which

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she took and kneaded into the hearts of one-and-twenty cakes of bread, and these she baked on the fire in the usual way, setting them aside in the cupboard according as they were done. She then put down a large pot of new milk, which she made into curds and whey, and gave Fin due instructions how to use the curds when Cucullin should come. Having done all this, she sat down quite contented, waiting for his arrival on the next day about two o'clock, that being the hour at which he was expected—for Fin knew as much by the sucking of his thumb. Now, this was a curious property that Fin's thumb had; but, notwithstanding all the wisdom and logic he used to suck out of it, it could never have stood to him here were it not for the wit of his wife. In this very thing, moreover, he was very much resembled by his great foe Cucullin; for it was well known that the huge strength he possessed all lay in the middle finger of his right hand, and that, if he happened by any mischance to lose it, he was no more, notwithstanding his bulk, than a common man.

At length, the next day, he was seen coming across the valley, and Oonagh knew that it was time to commence operations. She immediately made the cradle, and desired Fin to lie down in it, and cover himself up with the clothes.

"You must pass for your own child," said she; "so just lie there snug, and say nothing, but be guided by me." This, to be sure, was wormwood to Fin—I mean going into the cradle in such a cowardly manner—but he knew Oonagh well; and finding that he had nothing else for it, with a very rueful face he gathered himself into it, and lay snug as she had desired him.

About two o'clock, as he had been expected, Cucullin came in. "God save all here!" said he; is this where the great Fin M'Coul lives?"

"Indeed it is, honest man," replied Oonagh; "God save you kindly—won't you be sitting?"

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"Thank you, ma'am," says he, sitting down; "you're Mrs. M'Coul, I suppose?"

"I am," said she; "and I have no reason, I hope, to be ashamed of my husband."

"No," said the other; "he has the name of being the strongest and bravest man in Ireland; but for all that, there's a man not far from you that's very desirous of taking a shake with him. Is he at home?"

"Why, then, no," she replied; "and if ever a man left his house in a fury, he did. It appears that some one told him of a big basthoon of a giant called Cucullin being down at the Causeway to look for him, and so he set out there to try if he could catch him. Troth, I hope, for the poor giant's sake, he won't meet with him, for if he does, Fin will make paste of him at once."

"Well," said the other, "I am Cucullin, and I have been seeking him these twelvemonths, but he always kept clear of me; and I will never rest night or day till I lay my hands on him."

At this Oonagh set up a loud laugh, of great contempt, by the way, and looked at him as if he was only a mere handful of a man.

"Did you ever see Fin?" said she, changing her manner all at once.

"How could I?" said he; "he always took care to keep his distance."

"I thought so," she replied; "I judged as much; and if you take my advice, you poor-looking creature, you'll pray night and day that you may never see him, for I tell you it will be a black day for you when you do. But, in the mean time, you perceive that the wind's on the door, and as Fin himself is from home, maybe you'd be civil enough to turn the house, for it's always what Fin does when he's here."

This was a startler even to Cucullin; but he got up, how-

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ever, and after pulling the middle finger of his right hand until it cracked three times, he went outside, and getting his arms about the house, completely turned it as she had wished. When Fin saw this, he felt a certain description of moisture, which shall be nameless, oozing out through every pore of his skin; but Oonagh, depending upon her woman's wit, felt not a whit daunted.

"Arrah, then," said she, "as you are so civil, maybe you'd do another obliging turn for us, as Fin's not here to do it himself. You see, after this long stretch of dry weather we've had, we feel very badly off for want of water. Now, Fin says there's a fine spring-well somewhere under the rocks behind the hill here below, and it was his intention to pull them asunder; but having heard of you, he left the place in such a fury, that he never thought of it. Now, if you try to find it, troth I'd feel it a kindness."

She then brought Cucullin down to see the place, which was then all one solid rock; and, after looking at it for some time, he cracked his right middle finger nine times, and, stooping down, tore a cleft about four hundred feet deep, and a quarter of a mile in length, which has since been christened by the name of Lumford's Glen. This feat nearly threw Oonagh herself off her guard; but what won't a woman's sagacity and presence of mind accomplish?

"You'll now come in," said she, "and eat a bit of such humble fare as we can give you. Fin, even although he and you are enemies, would scorn not to treat you kindly in his own house; and, indeed, if I didn't do it even in his absence, he would not be pleased with me."

She accordingly brought him in, and placing half a dozen of the cakes we spoke of before him, together with a can or two of butter, a side of boiled bacon, and a stack of cabbage, she desired him to help himself—for this, be it known, was long before the invention of potatoes. Cucullin, who, by the way,

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was a glutton as well as a hero, put one of the cakes in his mouth to take a huge whack out of it, when both Fin and Oonagh were stunned with a noise that resembled something between a growl and a yell. "Blood and fury!" he shouted; "how is this? Here are two of my teeth out! What kind of bread is this you gave me?"

"What's the matter?" said Oonagh coolly.

"Matter!" shouted the other again; "why, here are the two best teeth in my head gone!"

"Why," said she, "that's Fin's bread—the only bread he ever eats when at home; but, indeed, I forgot to tell you that nobody can eat it but himself, and that child in the cradle there. I thought, however, that, as you were reported to be rather a stout little fellow of your size, you might be able to manage it, and I did not wish to affront a man that thinks himself able to fight Fin. Here's another cake—maybe it's not so hard as that."

Cucullin at the moment was not only hungry but ravenous, so he accordingly made a fresh set at the second cake, and immediately another yell was heard twice as loud as the first. "Thunder and giblets!" he roared, "take your bread out of this, or I will not have a tooth in my head; there's another pair of them gone!"

"Well, honest man," replied Oonagh, "if you're not able to eat the bread, say so quietly, and don't be wakening the child in the cradle there. There, now, he's awake upon me."

Fin now gave a skirl that startled the giant, as coming from such a youngster as he was represented to be. "Mother," said he, "I'm hungry—get me something to eat." Oonagh went over, and putting into his hand a cake *that had no griddle in it*, Fin, whose appetite in the meantime was sharpened by what he saw going forward, soon made it disappear. Cucullin was thunderstruck, and secretly thanked his stars that he had

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the good fortune to miss meeting Fin, for, as he said to himself, I'd have no chance with a man who could eat such bread as that, which even his son that's but in his cradle can munch before my eyes.

"I'd like to take a glimpse at the lad in the cradle," said he to Oonagh; "for I can tell you that the infant who can manage that nutriment is no joke to look at, or to feed of a scarce summer."

"With all the veins of my heart," replied Oonagh. "Get up, acushla, and show this decent little man something that won't be unworthy of your father, Fin M'Coul."

Fin, who was dressed for the occasion as much like a boy as possible, got up, and bringing Cucullin out—"Are you strong?" said he.

"Thunder an' ounds!" exclaimed the other, "what a voice in so small a chap!"

"Are you strong?" said Fin again; "are you able to squeeze water out of that white stone?" he asked, putting one into Cucullin's hand. The latter squeezed and squeezed the stone, but to no purpose: he might pull the rocks of Lumford's Glen asunder, and flatten a thunderbolt, but to squeeze water out of a white stone was beyond his strength. Fin eyed him with great contempt, as he kept straining and squeezing, and squeezing and straining, till he got black in the face with the efforts.

"Ah, you're a poor creature!" said Fin. "You a giant! Give me the stone here, and when I'll show what Fin's little son can do, you may then judge of what my daddy himself is."

Fin then took the stone, and slily exchanging it for the curds, he squeezed the latter until the whey, as clear as water, oozed out in a little shower from his hand.

"I'll now go in," said he, "to my cradle; for I'd scorn to lose my time with any one that's not able to eat my daddy's

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bread, or squeeze water out of a stone. Bedad, you had better be off out of this before he comes back; for if he catches you, it's in flummery he'd have you in two minutes."

Cucullin, seeing what he had seen, was of the same opinion himself; his knees knocked together with the terror of Fin's return, and he accordingly hastened in to bid Oonagh farewell, and to assure her, that from that day out, he never wished to hear of, much less to see, her husband. "I admit fairly that I'm not a match for him," said he, "strong as I am; tell him I will avoid him as I would the plague, and that I will make myself scarce in this part of the country while I live."

Fin, in the mean time, had gone into the cradle, where he lay very quietly, his heart at his mouth with delight that Cucullin was about to take his departure, without discovering the tricks that had been played off on him.

"It's well for you," said Oonagh, "that he doesn't happen to be here, for it's nothing but hawk's meat he'd make of you."

"I know that," says Cucullin; "divil a thing else he'd make of me; but before I go, will you let me feel what kind of teeth they are that can eat griddle-bread like *that*?"—and he pointed to it as he spoke.

"With all pleasure in life," said she; "only, as they're far back in his head, you must put your finger a good way in."

Cucullin was surprised to find such a powerful set of grinders in one so young; but he was still much more so on finding, when he took his hand from Fin's mouth, that he had left the very finger upon which his whole strength depended, behind him. He gave one loud groan, and fell down at once with terror and weakness. This was all Fin wanted, who now knew that his most powerful and bitterest enemy was completely at his mercy. He instantly started out of the cradle, and in a few minutes the great Cucullin, that was for such a length of time the terror of him and all his followers, lay a corpse before him. Thus did Fin, through the wit and invention of Oonagh,

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his wife, succeed in overcoming his enemy by stratagem, which he never could have done by force; and thus also is it proved that the women, if they bring us *into* many an unpleasant scrape, can sometimes succeed in getting us *out of* others that are as bad.*

* Of the grey stone mentioned in this legend, there is a very striking and melancholy anecdote to be told. Some twelve or thirteen years ago, a gentleman in the vicinity of the site of it was building a house, and, in defiance of the legend and curse connected with it, he resolved to break it up and use it. It was with some difficulty, however, that he could succeed in getting his labourers to have any thing to do with its mutilation. Two men, however, undertook to blast it, but, somehow, the process of ignition being mismanaged, it exploded prematurely, and one of them was killed. This coincidence was held as a fulfilment of the curse mentioned in the legend. I have heard that it remains in that mutilated state to the present day, no other person being found who had the hardihood to touch it. This stone, before it was disfigured, exactly resembled that which the country people term a miscaun of butter, which is precisely the shape of a complete prism, a circumstance, no doubt, which, in the fertile imagination of the old Senachies, gave rise to the superstition annexed to it.

"It may be mentioned that, in the Interlude of the Droich's Part of the Play, above quoted, the wife of Fin M'Coul is represented as the originator of a much larger mass of rock than the *grey stone*—namely, the basaltic hill of Craigforth, near Stirling. In like manner, Hibernian legend makes St. Patrick drop the rock of Dumbarton and Ailsa Crag on his way to Ireland."—*Messrs. Chambers.*

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ROSE MOAN,

THE IRISH MIDWIFE.

Of the many remarkable characters that have been formed by the spirit and habits of Irish feeling among the peasantry, there is not one so clear, distinct, and well traced, as that of the Midwife. We could mention several that are certainly marked with great precision, and that stand out in fine relief to the eye of the spectator, but none at all, who, in richness of colouring, in boldness of outline, or in firmness and force, can for a moment be compared with the Midwife. The Fiddler, for instance, lives a life sufficiently graphic and distinct; so does the Dancing-master, and so also does the Match-maker, but with some abatement of colouring. As for the Cosherer, the Senachie, the Keener, and the Foster-nurse, although all mellow-toned, and well individualized by the strong power of hereditary usage, yet do they stand dim and shadowy, when placed face to face with this great exponent of the national temperament.

It is almost impossible to conceive a character of greater self-importance than an Irish Midwife, or who exhibits in her whole bearing a more complacent conciousness of her own privileges. The Fiddler, might be dispensed with, an the Dancing-master might follow him off the stage; the Cosherer, Senachie, Keener, might all disappear, and the general business of life still go on as before. But not so with her whom we are describing; and this conviction is the very basis of her power, the secret source from which she draws the confidence that bears down every rival claim upon the affections of the people.

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Before we introduce Rose Moan to our kind readers, we shall briefly relate a few points of character peculiar to the Irish Midwife, because they are probably not in general known to a very numerous class of our readers. This is a matter which we are the more anxious to do, because it is undeniable that an acquaintance with many of the old lengendary powers with which she was supposed to be invested, is fast fading out of the public memory; and unless put into timely record, it is to be feared that in the course of one or two generations more, they may altogether disappear and be forgotten.

One of the least known of the secrets which old traditionary lore affirmed to have been in possession of the midwife, was the knowledge of how beer might be brewed from heather. The Irish people believe that the Danes understood and practised this valuable process, and will assure you that the liquor prepared from materials so cheap and abundant was superior in strength and flavour to any ever produced from malt. Nay, they will tell you how it conferred such bodily strength and courage upon those who drank it, that it was to the influence and virtue of this alone that the Danes held such a protracted sway, and won so many victories in Ireland. It was a secret, however, too valuable to be disclosed, especially to enemies, who would lose no time in turning the important consequences of it against the Danes themselves. The consequence was, that from the day the first Dane set foot upon the soil of Ireland, until that upon which they bade it adieu for ever, no Irishman was ever able to get possession of it. It came to be known, however, and the knowledge of it is said to be still in the country, but must remain unavailable until the fulfilment of a certain prophecy connected with the liberation of Ireland shall take away the obligation of a most solemn oath, which bound the original recipient of the secret to this conditional silence. The circumstances are said to have been these:—

On the evening previous to the final embarkation of the

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Danes for their own country, the wife of their prince was seized with the pains of child-birth, and there being no midwife among themselves, an Irish one was brought, who, as the enmity between the nations was both strong and bitter, resolutely withheld her services, unless upon the condition of being made acquainted with this invaluable process. The crisis it seems being a very trying one, the condition was complied with; but the midwife was solemnly sworn never to communicate it to any but a woman, and never to put it in practice until Ireland should be free, and any two of its provinces at peace with each other. The midwife, thinking very naturally that there remained no obstacle to the accomplishment of these conditions but the presence of the Danes themselves, and seeing that they were on the eve of leaving the country for ever, imagined herself perfectly safe in entering into the obligation; but it so happened, says the tradition, that although the knowledge of the secret is among the Irish midwives still, yet it never could be applied, and never will, until Ireland shall be in the state required by the terms of her oath. So runs the tradition.

There is, however, one species of power with which some of the old midwives were said to be gifted, so exquisitely ludicrous, and yet at the same time so firmly fixed in the belief of many among the people, that we cannot do justice to the character without mentioning so strange an acquisition. It is this, that where a husband happens to be cruel to his wife, or suspects her unjustly, the midwife is able, by some mysterious charm, to inflict upon him and remove from the wife the sufferings annexed to her confinement, as the penalty mentioned by holy writ which is to follow the sex in consequence of the transgression of our mother Eve. Some of our readers may perhaps imagine this to be incredible, but we assure them that it is strictly true. Such a superstition did prevail in Ireland among the humbler classes, and still does, to an extent which

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would surprise any one not as well acquainted with the old Irish usages and superstitions as we happen to be. The manner in which the midwife got possession of this power is as follows:—It frequently happened that the "good people," or *Dhoine Shee*—that is, the fairies—were put to the necessity of having recourse to the aid of the midwife. On one of those occasions it seems, the good woman discharged her duties so successfully, that the fairy matron, in requital for her services and promptitude of attendance, communicated to her this secret, so formidable to all bad husbands. From the period alluded to, say the people, it has of course been gladly transmitted from hand to hand, and on many occasions resorted to with fearful but salutary effect. Within our own memory several instances of its application were pointed out to us, and the very individuals themselves, when closely interrogated, were forced to an assertion that was at least equivalent to an admission, "it was nothing but an attack of the cholic," which, by the way, was little else than a libel upon that departed malady. Many are the tales told of cases in which midwives were professionally serviceable to the good people; but unless their assistance was repaid by the communication of some secret piece of knowledge, it was better to receive no payment, any other description of remuneration being considered unfortunate.

From this source also was derived another most valuable quality said to be possessed by the Irish midwife, but one which we should suppose the virtue of our fair countrywomen rendered of very unfrequent application. This was the power of destroying jealousy between man and wife. We forget whether it was said to be efficacious in cases of guilt, but we should imagine that the contrary would rather hold good, as an Irishman is not exactly that description of husband who would suffer himself to be charmed back into the arms of a faithless wife. This was effected by the knowledge of a certain herb, a decoc-

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tion of which the parties were to drink nine successive times, each time before sunrise and after sunset. Of course the name of the herb was kept a profound secret; but even if it had been known, it could have proved of little value, for the full force of its influence depended on a charm which the midwife had learned among the fairies. Whether it was the *Anacampserotes* of the middle ages or not, is difficult to say; but one thing is certain, that not only have midwives, but other persons of both sexes, gone about through the country professing to cure jealousy by the juice or decoction of a mysterious herb, which was known only to themselves. It is not unlikely to suppose that this great secret was, after all, nothing more than a perverted application of the Waters of Jealousy, mentioned by Moses, and that it only resembled many other charms practised in this and other countries, which are generally founded upon certain passages of Scripture. Indeed, there is little doubt that the practice of attempting to cure jealousy by herbs existed elsewhere as well as in Ireland; and one would certainly imagine that Shakspeare, who left nothing connected with the human heart untouched, must have alluded to the very custom we are treating of, when he makes Iago, speaking of Othello's jealousy, say—

> "Look where he comes! not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou hadst yesterday."

Here it is quite evident that the efficacy of the "syrups" spoken of was to be tried upon the mind only in which the Moor's horrible malady existed. That Shakspeare, in the passage quoted, alluded to this singular custom, is, we think, at least probable.

We have said that the midwife stood high as a match-maker, and so, unquestionably, she did. No woman was better acquainted with charms of all kinds, especially with those that

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were calculated to aid or throw light upon the progress of love. If, for instance, young persons of either sex felt doubt as to whether their passion was returned, they generally consulted the midwife, who, on hearing a statement of their apprehensions, appointed a day on which she promised to satisfy them. Accordingly, at the time agreed upon, she and the party interested repaired as secretly as might be, and with much mystery, to some lonely place, where she produced a Bible and key both of which she held in a particular position—that is, the Bible suspended by a string which passed through the key. She then uttered with a grave and solemn face the following verses from the Book of Ruth, which the young person accompanying her was made to repeat slowly and deliberately after her :—

"And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

"Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

If, at the conclusion of these words, the Bible turned, she affirmed, with the air of a prophetess, not only that the affection of the parties was mutual, but that their courtship would terminate in marriage. If, on the contrary, it remained stationary, the passion existed only on one side, and the parties were not destined for each other. Oh, credulous love! not to see that the venerable sybil could allow the Bible to turn or not, just as she may have previously ascertained from either party whether their attachment was reciprocal or otherwise! We dare say the above charm is seldom resorted to now, and of course this harmless imposition on the lovers will soon cease to be practised at all.

The midwife's aid to lovers, however, did not stop here. If

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they wished to create a passion in some heart where it had not previously existed, she told them to get a dormouse and reduce it to powder, a pinch of which, if put into the drink of the person beloved, would immediately rivet his or her affections upon the individual by whose hand it was administered. Many anecdotes are told of humorous miscarriages that resulted from a neglect of this condition. One is especially well known, of a young woman who gave the potion through the hands of her grandmother; and the consequence was, that the bachelor immediately made love to the old lady instead of the young one, and eventually became grandfather to the latter instead of her husband. Indeed, the administering of philters and the use of charms in Ireland was formerly very frequent, and occasionally attended by results which had not been anticipated. The use especially of *cantharides*, or French flies, in the hands of the ignorant, has often been said to induce madness, and not unfrequently to occasion death. It is not very long since a melancholy case of the latter from this very cause appeared in an Irish newspaper.

The midwife was also a great interpreter of dreams, omens, auguries, and signs of all possible sorts, and no youngsters who ever consulted her need be long at a loss for a personal view of the object of their love. They had only to seek in some remote glen or dell for a briar whose top had taken root in the ground, or a briar with two roots, as it is called: this they were to put under their pillow and sleep upon, and the certain consequence was, that the image of the future wife or husband would appear to them in a dream. She was also famous at cup-tossing; and nothing could surpass the shrewd and sapient expression of her face as she sat solemnly peering into the grounds of the tea for the imaginary forms of rings, and love-letters, and carriages, which were necessary to the happy purport of her divination, for she felt great reluctance to foretell calamity. She seldom, however, had recourse to card-cutting, which she looked upon as an unholy practice; the

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cards, as every one knows, being the only book on which the devil says his prayers night and morning. Who has not heard of his *prayer-book?*

We are now to consider the midwife in the capacity of a woman not only brimful of medicinal knowledge, but possessed of many secrets, which the mere physician or apothecary could never penetrate. As a doctress, she possessed a very high reputation for all complaints incident to children and females; and where herbal skill failed, unlike the mere scientific man of diplomas, she could set physical causes and effects aside, and have recourse at once to the supernatural and miraculous.

For instance, there are two complaints which she is, beyond any other individual, celebrated for managing—that is to say, head-ache, and another malady which is anonymous, or only known to country folk by what is termed "the spool or bone of the breast being down." The first she cures by a very formal and serious process called "measuring the head." This is done by a ribbon, which she puts round the cranium, repeating, during the admeasurement, a certain prayer or charm from which the operation is to derive its whole efficacy. The measuring is performed twice—in the first instance, to show that its sutures are separated by disease, or, to speak more plainly, that the bones of the head are absolutely opened, and that as a natural consequence the head must be much larger than when the patient is in a state of health. The circumference of the first admeasurement is marked upon a ribbon, after which she repeats the charm that is to remove the head-ache, and measures the cranium again, in order to show, by a comparison of the two ribbons, that the sutures have been closed, the charm successful, and the head-ache consequently removed. It is impossible to say how the discrepancy in the measurement is brought about; but be that as it may, the writer of this has frequently seen the operation performed in such a way as to defy the most scrutinizing eye to detect any appearance of imposture, and he is convinced

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that in the majority of cases there is not the slightest imposture intended. The operator is in truth a dupe to a strong and delusive enthusiasm.

When the midwife raises the spool of the breast, the operation is conducted without any assistance from the supernatural. If a boy or girl diminishes in flesh, is troubled with want of rest or of appetite, without being afflicted with any particular disease, either acute or local, the midwife puts her finger under the bone which projects over the pit of the stomach, and immediately feels that "the spool of the breast is down"—in other words, she informs the parents that the bone is bent inwards, and presses upon *the heart!* The raising of this precisely resembles the operation of cupping. She gets a penny piece, which she places upon the spot affected, the patient having been first laid in a supine posture; after this she burns a little spirits in a tumbler in order to exhaust the air in it; she then presses it quickly against the part which is under the penny piece; and in a few moments, to the amazement of the lookers-on, it is drawn strongly up, and remains so until the heart-bone is supposed to be raised in such a manner as that it will not return.

The next charm for which she is remarkable among the people, is that by which a mote is taken out of the eye. The manner of doing this is as follows: A white basin is got, and a jug of the purest water; the midwife repeatedly rinses her mouth with the water, until it returns as pure and clear as when she took it. She then walks to and fro, repeating the words of the charm, her mouth all the time filled with the water. When the charm is finished, she pours the water out of her mouth into the clean basin, and will point out the mote, or whatever it may have been, floating in the water, or lying in the bottom of the vessel. In fact, you could scarcely mention a malady with which the midwife of the old school was not prepared to grapple by the aid of a charm. The tooth-ache, the cholic, measles, child-birth, all had their

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respective charms. The latter especially required one of a very pithy cast. Every one knows that the power of fairies in Ireland is never so strong, nor so earnestly put forth, as in the moment of parturition, when they strive by all possible means to secure the new-born infant before it is christened, and leave a changeling in its stead. Invaluable indeed is the midwife who is possessed of a charm to prevent this, and knows how to arrange all the ceremonies that are to be observed upon the occasion, without making any mistake, for that would vitiate all. Many a time, on such occasions, have the ribs of the roof been made to crack, the windows rattled out, the door pushed with violence, and the whole house shaken as if it would tumble about their heads—and all by the fairies; but to no purpose: the charm of the midwife was a rock of defence; the necessary precautions had been taken, and they were ultimately forced to depart in a strong blast of wind, screaming and howling with rage and disappointment as they went.

There were also charms for the diseases of cattle, to cure which there exist in Ireland some processes of very distant antiquity. We ourselves have seen elemental fire produced by the friction of two green boughs together, applied as a remedy for the black-leg and murrain. This is evidently of Pagan origin, and must have some remote affinity with the old doctrines of Baal, the ancient god of fire, whose worship was once so general in Ireland.

Of these charms it may be said that they are all of a religious character, some of them evidently the production of imposture, and others apparently of those who seriously believed in their efficacy. There is one thing peculiar about them, which is, that they must be taught to persons of the opposite sex: a man, for instance, cannot teach a charm to a man, nor a woman to a woman, but he may to a woman, as a woman may to a man. If taught or learned in violation of this principle, they possess no virtue.

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In treating of the Irish midwife, we cannot permit ourselves to overlook the superstition of the "lucky caul," which comes so clearly within her province. The caul is a thin membrane, about the consistence of very fine silk, which covers the head of a new-born infant like a cap. It is always the omen of great good fortune to the infant and parents; and in Ireland, when any one has unexpectedly fallen into the receipt of property, or any other temporal good, it is customary to say, "such a person was born with a 'lucky caul' on his head."

Why these are considered lucky, it would be a very difficult matter to ascertain. Several instances of good fortune, happening to such as were born with them, might by their coincidences form a basis for the superstition; just as the fact of three men during one severe winter having been found drowned, each with two shirts on, generated an opinion which has now become fixed and general in that parish, that it is unlucky to wear two shirts at once. We are not certain whether the caul is in general the perquisite of the midwife—sometimes we believe it is; at all events, her integrity occasionally yields to the desire of possessing it. In many cases she conceals its existence, in order that she may secretly dispose of it to good advantage, which she frequently does; for it is considered to be the herald of good fortune to those who can get it into their possession. Now, let not our English neighbours smile at us for those things, until they wash their own hands clear of such practices. At this day a caul will bring a good price in the most civilized city in the world—to wit, the good city of London—the British metropolis. Nay, to such lengths has the mania for cauls been carried there, that they have been actually advertised for in the *Times* newspaper; and it is perfectly well known that a large price will be given for them by that very intelligent class of men, the ship captains of England, who look upon a caul as a certain preservative against shipwreck.

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Of a winter evening, at the fireside, there can be few more amusing companions than a midwife of the old school. She has the smack of old times and old usages about her, and tastes of that agreeable simplicity of manners which always betokens a harmless and inoffensive heart. Her language is at once easy, copious, and minute, and if a good deal pedantic, the pedantry is rather the traditionary phraseology and antique humour which descends with her profession, than the peculiar property or bias of her individual mind. She affects much mystery, and intimates that she could tell many strange stories of high life; but she is always too honourable to betray the confidence that has been reposed in her good faith and secrecy. In her dress she always consults warmth and comfort, and seldom or never looks to appearance. Flannel and cotton she heaps on herself in abundant folds, and the consequence is, that although subject to all the inclemency of the seasons both by night and day, she is hardly ever known to be sick.

Having thus recited everything, so far as we could remember it, connected with the social antiquities of her calling, and detailed some matters not generally known, that may, we trust, be interesting to those who are fond of looking at the springs which often move rustic society, we now close this "Essay on Midwifery," and beg to bring the midwife herself personally on the stage, that she may speak and act for herself.

The village of Ballycomaisy was as pleasant a little place as one might wish to see of a summer's day. To be sure, like all other Irish villages, it was remarkable for a superfluity of "pigs, praties, and childre," which being the stock in trade of an Irish cabin, it is to be presumed that very few villages either

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in Ireland or elsewhere could go on properly without them. It consisted principally of one long street, which you entered from the north-west side by one of those old-fashioned bridges, the arches of which were much more akin to the Gothic than the Roman. Most of the houses were of mud, a few of stone, one or two of which had the honour of being slated on the front side of the roof, and rustically thatched on the back, where ostentation was not necessary. There were two or three shops, a liberal sprinkling of public houses, a chapel a little out of the town, and an old dilapidated market-house near the centre. A few little bye-streets projected in a lateral direction from the main one, which was terminated on the side opposite to the north-west by a pound, through which, as usual, ran a shallow stream, that was gathered into a little gutter as it crossed the road. A crazy antiquated mill, all covered and cobwebbed with grey mealy dust, stood about a couple of hundred yards out of the town, to which two straggling rows of houses, that looked like an abortive street, led you. This mill was surrounded by a green common, which was again hemmed in by a fine river, that ran round in a curving line from under the hunchbacked arch of the bridge we mentioned at the beginning. Now, a little behind, or rather above this mill, on the skirt of the aforesaid common, stood a rather neat-looking whitish cabin with about half a rood of garden behind it. It was but small, and consisted merely of a sleeping-room and kitchen. On one side of the door there was a window, opening on hinges; and on the outside, to the right as you entered the house, there was placed a large stone, about four feet high, backed by a sloping mound of earth, so graduated as to allow a person to ascend the stone without any difficulty. In this cabin lived Rose Moan, the midwife; and we need scarcely inform our readers that the stone in question was her mounting-stone, by which she was enabled to place herself on pillion or crupper, as the case happened, when called out upon her usual avocation.

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Rose was what might be called a *flahoolagh*, or portly woman, with a good-humoured set of Milesian features; that is to say, a pair of red, broad cheeks, a well-set nose, allowing for the disposition to turn up, and two black twinkling eyes, with a mellow expression that betokened good nature, and a peculiar description of knowing *professional* humour that is never to be met with in any *but* a midwife. Rose was dressed in a red flannel petticoat, a warm cotton sack or wrapper, which pinned easily over a large bust, and a comfortable woollen shawl. She always wore a long-bordered morning cap, over which, while travelling, she pinned a second shawl of Scotch plaid; and to protect her from the cold night air, she enfolded her precious person in a deep blue cloak of the true indigo tint. On her head, over cloak and shawl and morning cap, was fixed a black "splush hat," with the leaf strapped down by her ears on each side, so that in point of fact she cared little how it blew, and never once dreamed that such a process as that of Raper or Mackintosh was necessary to keep the liege subjects of these realms warm and water-proof, nor that two systems should exist in Ireland so strongly antithetical to each other as those of Raper and Father Mathew.

Having thus given a brief sketch of her local habitation and personal appearance, we shall transfer our readers to the house of a young new-married farmer named Keho, who lived in a distant part of the parish. Keho was a comfortable fellow, full of good nature and credulity; but his wife happened to be one of the sharpest, meanest, most suspicious, and miserable devils that ever was raised in good-humoured Ireland. Her voice was as sharp and her heart as cold as an icicle; and as for her tongue, it was incessant and interminable. Were it not that her husband, who, though good-natured, was fiery and resolute when provoked, exercised a firm and salutary control over her, she would have starved both him and her servants into perfect skeletons. And what was still worse, with a temper that was

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vindictive and tyrannical, she affected to be religious, and upon those who did not know her, actually attempted to pass herself off as a saint.

One night, about ten or twelve months after his marriage, honest Corny Keho came out to the barn, where slept his two farm servants, named Phil Hannigan and Barny Casey. He had been sitting by himself, composing his mind for a calm night's sleep, or probably for a curtain lecture, by taking a contemplative whiff of the pipe, when the servant wench, with a certain air of hurry, importance, and authority, entered the kitchen, and informed him that Rose Moan must immediately be sent for.

"The misthress isn't well, masther, an' the sooner she's sint for, the betther. So mind my words, sir, if you plaise, an' pack aff either Phil or Barny for Rose Moan, an' I hope I won't have to ax it again—hem!"

Dandy Keho—for so Corny was called, as being remarkable for his slovenliness—started up hastily, and having taken the pipe out of his mouth, was about to place it on the hob; but reflecting that the whiff could not much retard him in the delivery of his orders, he sallied out to the barn, and knocked.

"Who's there?"

"Lave that, wid you, unless you wish to be shotted." This was followed by a loud laugh from within.

"Boys, get up wid all haste: it's the misthress. Phil, saddle Hollowback and fly—(puff)—fly in a jiffy for Rose Moan; an' do you, Barny, clap a back-sugaun—(puff)—an Sobersides, an' be aff for the misthress's mother—(puff)."

Both were dressing themselves before he had concluded, and in a very few minutes were off in different directions, each according to the orders he had received. With Barny we have nothing to do, unless to say that he lost little time in bringing Mrs. Keho's mother to her aid; but as Phil is gone for a much more important character, we beg our readers to

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return with us to the cabin of Rose Moan, who is now fast asleep—for it is twelve o'clock of a beautiful moonlight night, in the pleasant month of August. Tap-tap. "Is Mrs. Moan at home?" In about half a minute her warm good-looking face, enveloped in flannel, is protruded from the window.

"Who's that, *in God's name?*" The words in italics were added, lest the message might be one from the fairies.

"I'm Dandy Keho's servant—one of them, at any rate—an' my misthress has got a stitch in her side—ha! ha! ha!"

"Aisy, avick—so, she's *down*, thin—aisy—I'll be wid you like a bow out of an arrow. Put your horse over to 'the stone,' an' have him ready. The Lord bring her over her difficulties, any way, amin, a chierna!"

She then pulled in her head, and in about three or four minutes sallied out, dressed as we have described her; and having placed herself on the crupper, coolly put her right arm round Phil's body, and desired him to ride on with all possible haste.

"Push an, avouchal, push an—time's precious at all times, but on business like this every minute is worth a life. But there's always one comfort, that God is marciful. Push forrid, avick."

"Never fear, Mrs. Moan. If it's in Hollowback, bedad I'm the babe that'll take it out of him. Come, ould Hackball, trot out—you don't know the message you're an, nor who you're carryin'."

"Isn't your misthress—manin' the Dandy's wife—a daughter of ould Fitzy Finnegan's, the schrew of Glendhu?"

"Faith, you may say that, Rose, as we all know to our cost. Be me song, she does have us sometimes that you might see through us; an' only for the masther——but, dang it, no matter—she's down now, poor woman, an' it's not jist the time to be rakin' up her failins."

"It is not, an' God mark you to grace for sayin' so. At a

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time like this we must forget every thing, only to do the best we can for our fellow-creatures. What are you lookin' at, avick?"

Now, this question naturally arose from the fact that honest Phil had been, during their short conversation, peering keenly on each side of him, as if he expected an apparition to rise from every furze-bush on the common. The truth is, he was almost proverbial for his terror of ghosts and fairies, and all supernatural visitants whatever; but upon this occasion his fears rose to a painful height, in consequence of the popular belief, that, when a midwife is sent for, the Good People throw every possible obstruction in her way, either by laming the horse, if she rides, or by disqualifying the guide from performing his duty as such. Phil, however, felt ashamed to avow his fears on these points, but still could not help unconsciously turning the conversation to the very topic he thought to have avoided.

"What war you lookin' at, avick?"

"Why, bedad, there appeared something there beyant, like a man, only it was darker. But be this and be that—hem, ehem!—if I could get my hands on him, whatsomever he"——

"Hushth, boy, hould your tongue; you don't know but it's the very word you war goin' to say might do us harm."

"—Whatsomever he is, that I'd give him a lift on Hollowback, if he happened to be any poor fellow that stood in need of it. Oh! the sorra word I was goin' to say against any thing or any body."

"You're right, dear. If you knew as much as I could tell you—push an—you'd have a dhrop o' sweat at the ind of every hair on your head."

"Be my song, I'm tould you know a power o' quare things, Mrs. Moan; an' if all that's said is thrue, you sartinly do."

Now, had Mrs. Moan and her heroic guide passed through the village of Ballycomaisy, the latter would not have felt his

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fears so strong upon him. The road, however, along which they were now going was a grass-grown *bohreen*, that led them from behind her cabin through a waste and lonely part of the country; and as it was a saving of better than two miles in point of distance, Mrs. Moan would not hear of their proceeding by any other direction. The tenor of her conversation, however, was fast bringing Phil to the state she so graphically and pithily described.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"Phil Hannigan, a son of fat Phil's of Balnasaggart, an' a cousin to Paddy, who lost a finger in the Gansy (Guernsey) wars."

"I know. Well, Phil, in throth the hairs 'ud stand like stalks o' barley, upon your head, if you heard all I could mintion."

Phil instinctively put his hand up and pressed down his hat, as if it had been disposed to fly from off his head.

"Hem! ahem! Why, I'm tould it's wondherful. But is it thrue, Mrs. Moan, that you have been brought *on business* to some o' the"—here Phil looked about him cautiously, and lowered his voice to a whisper—"to some o' the fairy women?"

"Hushth, man alive—what the sorra timpted you to call them anything but the Good People? This day's Thursday—God stand betune us an' harm. No, Phil, I name nobody. But there was a woman, a midwife—mind, avick, that I don't say *who* she was—may be I know why too, an' may be it would be as much as my life is worth"——

"Aisey, Mrs. Moan! God presarve us! what is that tall thing there to the right?"—and he commenced the Lord's Prayer in Irish, as fast as he could get out the words.

"Why, don't you see, boy, it's a fir-tree?"

"Ay, faix, an' so it is; bedad I thought it was gettin' taller an' taller. Ay!—hut! it *is* only a tree."

"Well, dear, there was a woman, an' she was called away

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one night by a little gentleman dressed in green. I'll tell you the story some time—only this, that havin' done her *duty*, an' tuck no payment, she was called out the same night to a neighbour's wife, an' a purtier boy you couldn't see than she left behind her. But it seems she happened to touch one of his eyes wid a hand that had a taste of *their* panado an it; an' as the child grew up, every one wondhered to hear him speak of the multitudes o' thim that he seen in all directions. Well, my dear, he kept never sayin' anything to them, until one day, when he was in the fair of Ballycomaisy, that he saw them whippin' away meal an' cotton an' butther, an' everything that they thought serviceable to them; so you see he could hould in no longer, an' says he, to a little fellow that was very active an' thievish among them, 'Why duv you take what doesn't belong to you?' says he. The little fellow looked up at him"——

"God be about us, Rose, what is that white thing goin' along the ditch to the left of us?"

"It's a sheep, don't you see? Faix, I believe you're cowardly at night."

"Ay, faix, an' so it is, but it looked very quare, somehow."

"—An', says he, 'How do you know that?' 'Bekase I see you all,' says the other. 'An' which eye do you see us all wid?' says he again. 'Why, wid the left,' says the boy. Wid that he gave a short whiff of a blast up into the eye, an' from that day not a stime the poor boy was never able to see wid it. No, Phil, I didn't say it was *myself*—I named *nobody*."

"An', Mrs. Moan, is it thrue that you can put the dughaughs upon them that trate their wives badly?"

"Whisht, Phil. When you marry, keep your timper—that's all. You knew long Ned Donnelly?"

"Ay, bedad, sure enough; there was quare things said about"——

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"Push an, avick, push an; for who knows how some of us is wanted? You have a good masther, I believe, Phil? It's poison the same Ned would give me if he could. Push an, dear."

Phil felt that he had got his answer. The abrupt mystery of her manner and her curt allusions left him little, indeed, to guess at. In this way did the conversation continue, Phil feloniously filching, as he thought, from her own lips, a corroboration of the various knowledge and extraordinary powers which she was believed to possess, and she ingeniously feeding his credulity, merely by enigmatical hints and masked allusions; for although she took care to affirm nothing directly or personally of herself, yet did she contrive to answer him in such a manner as to confirm every report that had gone abroad of the strange purposes she could effect.

"Phil, wasn't there an uncle o' yours up in the Mountain Bar that didn't live happily for some time wid his wife?"

"I believe so, Rose; but it was before my time, or any way when I was only a young shaver."

"An' did you ever hear how the reconcilement came betune them?"

"No, bedad," replied Phil, "I never did; an' that's no wondher, for it was a thing they never liked to spake of."

"Throth, it's thrue for you, boy. Well, I brought about ——Push an, dear, push an.——They're as happy a couple now as breaks bread, any way, and that's all they wanted."

"I'd wager a thirteen it was you did that, Rose."

"Hut, gorsoon, hould your tongue. Sure they're happy, now, I say, whosomever did it. I named nobody, nor I take no pride to myself, Phil, out o' sich things. Some people's gifted above others, an' that's all. But, Phil?"

"Well, ma'am?"

"How does the Dandy an' his scald of a wife agree? for, throth I'm tould she's nothing else."

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"Faix, but middlin' itself. As I tould you, she often has us as empty as a paper lanthern, wid devil a thing but the light of a good conscience inside of us. If we *pray* ourselves, begorra she'll take care we'll have the *fastin'* at first cost; so that you see, ma'am, we hould a devout situation undher her."

"An' so that's the way wid you?"

"Ay, the downright thruth, an' no mistake. Why, the stirabout she makes would run nine miles along a dale boord, an' scald a man at the far end of it."

"Throth, Phil, I never like to go next or near sich women, or sich places; but for the sake o' the innocent we must forget the guilty. So, push an, avick, push an. Who knows but it's life an' death wid us? Have you ne'er a spur on?"

"The devil a spur I tuck time to wait for."

"Well, afther all, it's not right to let a messager come for a woman like me, widout what is called the Midwife's Spur—a spur in the head—for it has long been said that one in the head is worth two in the heel, an' so indeed it is,—on business like this, any way."

"Mrs. Moan, do you know the Moriartys of Ballaghmore, ma'am?"

"Which o' them, honey?"

"Mick o' the Esker Beg."

"To be sure I do. A well-favoured dacent family they are, an' full o' the world too, the Lord spare it to them."

"Bedad, they are, ma'am, a well-favoured* family. Well, ma'am, isn't is odd, but somehow there's neither man, woman, nor child in the parish but gives you the good word above all the women in it; but as for a midwife, why, I heard my aunt say that if ever mother an' child owended their lives to another, she did her's and the babby's to you."

* This term in Ireland means "handsome"—"good-looking."

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The reader may here perceive that Phil's flattery must have had some peculiar design in it, in connexion with the Moriartys, and such indeed was the fact. But we had better allow him to explain matters himself.

"Well, honey, sure that was but my duty; but God be praised for all, for every thing depinds on the Man above. She should call in one o' those newfangled women who take out their Dispatches from the Lying-in-College in Dublin below; for you see, Phil, there is sich a place there—an' it stands to raison that there should be a Fondlin' Hospital beside it, which there is too, they say; but, honey, what are these poor ignorant cratures but *new lights*, every one o' them, that a dacent woman's life isn't safe wid?"

"To be sure, Mrs. Moan; an' every one knows they're not to be put in comparishment wid a woman like you, that knows sich a power. But how does it happen, ma'am, that the Moriartys does be spakin' but middlin' of you?"

"Of me, avick?"

"Ay, faix; I'm tould they spread the mouth at you sometimes, espishily when the people does be talkin' about all the quare things you can do."

"Well, well, dear, let them have their laugh—they may laugh that win, you know. Still one doesn't like to be provoked—no indeed."

"Faix, an' Mick Moriarty has a purty daughther, Mrs. Moan, an' a purty penny he can give her, by all accounts. The nerra one o' myself but would be glad to put my commedher on her, if I knew how. I hope you find yourself aisey on your sate, ma'am?"

"I do, honey. Let them talk, Phil; let them talk; it may come their turn yet—only I didn't expect it from *them*. You! hut, avick, what chance would *you* have with Mick Moriarty's daughther?"

"Ay, every chance an' sartinty too, if some one that I know,

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and that every one that knows her, respects, would only give me a lift. There's no use in comin' about the bush, Mrs. Moan—bedad it's yourself I mane. You could do it. An', whisper, betune you and me it would be only sarvin' them right, in regard of the way they spake of you—sayin', indeed, an' galivantin' to the world that you know no more than another woman, an' that ould Pol Doolin of Ballymagowan knows oceans more that you do."

This was, perhaps, as artful a plot as could be laid for engaging the assistance of Mrs. Moan in Phil's design upon Moriarty's daughter. He knew perfectly well that she would not, unless strongly influenced, lend herself to any thing of the kind between two persons whose circumstances in life differed so widely as those of a respectable farmer's daughter with a good portion, and a penniless labouring boy. With great adroitness, therefore, he contrived to excite her prejudices against them by the most successful arguments he could possibly use, namely, a contempt for her imputed knowledge, and praise of her rival. Still she was in the habit of acting coolly, and less from impulse than from a shrewd knowledge of the best way to sustain her own reputation, without undertaking too much.

"Well, honey, an' so you wish me to assist you? Maybe I could do it, an' maybe—But push an, dear, move him an—we'll think of it, an' spake more about it some other time. I must think of what's afore me now—so move, move, acushla; push an."

Much conversation of the same nature took place between them, in which each bore a somewhat characteristic part; for to say truth, Phil was as knowing a "boy" as you might wish to become acquainted with. In Rose, however, he had a woman of no ordinary shrewdness to encounter; and the consequence was, that each, after a little more chat, began to understand the other a little too well to render the topic of the

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Moriartys, to which Phil again reverted, so interesting as it had been. Rose soon saw that Phil was only a *plasthey*, or sweetener, and only "soothered" her for his own purposes; and Phil perceived that Rose understood his tacties too well to render any further tampering with her vanity, either safe or successful.

At length they arrived at Dandy Keho's house, and in a moment the Dandy himself took her in his arms, and, placing her gently on the ground, shook hands with and cordially welcomed her. It is very singular, but no less true, that the moment a midwife enters the house of her patient, she always uses the plural number, whether speaking in her own person or in that of the former.

"You're welcome, Rose, an' I'm proud an' happy to see you here, an' it'ill make poor Bridget strong, an' give her courage, to know you're near her."

"How are we, Dandy? how are we, avick?"

"Oh, bedad, middlin', wishin' very much for you of coorse, as I hear"——

"Well, honey, go away now. I have some words to say afore I go in, that'll sarve us, maybe—a charm it is that has great vartue in it."

The Dandy then withdrew to the barn, where the male portion of the family were staying until the *ultimatum* should be known. A good bottle of potheen, however, was circulating among them, for every one knows that occasions of this nature usually generate a festive and hospitable spirit.

Rose now went round the house in the direction from east to west, stopping for a short time at each of the windows, which she marked with the sign of the cross five times; that is to say, once at each corner, and once in the middle. At each corner also of the house she signed the cross, and repeated the following words or charm:—

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The four Evangels and the four Divines,
God bless the moon an us when it shines.
New moon,* true moon, God bless me,
God bless this house an' this family.
Matthew, Mark, Luke, an' John,
God bless the bed that she lies on.
God bless the manger where Christ was born,
An' lave joy an' comfort here in the morn.
St. Bridget an' St. Patrick, an' the holy spouse,
Keep the fairies for ever far from this house. Amen.
Glora yea, Glora yea, Glora yea yeelish,
Glora n'ahir, Glora n'vac, Glora n' spirid neev. Amen.

These are the veritable words of the charm, which she uttered in the manner and with the forms aforesaid. Having concluded them, she then entered into the house, where we leave her for a time with our best wishes.

In the barn, the company were very merry, Dandy himself being as pleasant as any of them, unless when his brow became shaded by the very natural anxiety for the welfare of his wife and child, which from time to time returned upon him. Stories were told, songs sung, and jokes passed, all full of good nature and not a little fun, some of it at the expense of the Dandy himself, who laughed at and took it all in good part. An occasional *bulletin* came out through a servant maid, that matters were just in the same way; a piece of intelligence which damped Keho's mirth considerably. At length he himself was sent for by the midwife, who wished to speak with him at the door.

"I hope there's nothing like danger, Rose?"

"Not at all, honey; but the truth is, we want a seventh son who isn't left-handed."

"A seventh son! Why, what do you want him for?"

"Why, dear, just to give her three shakes in his arms—it never fails."

"Bedad, an' that's fortunate; for there's Mickey M'Sorley

* If it did not happen to be new moon, the words were "good moon," &c.

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of the Broad Bog's a seventh son, an' he's not two gunshots from this."

"Well, aroon, hurry off one or two o' the boys for him, and tell Phil, if he makes haste, that I'll have a word to say to him afore I go." This intimation to Phil put feathers to his heels; for from the moment that he and Barny started, he did not once cease to go at the top of his speed. It followed, as a matter of course, that honest Mickey M'Sorley dressed himself and was back at Keho's house before the family believed it possible the parties could have been there. This ceremony of getting a seventh son to shake the sick woman, in cases where difficulty or danger may be apprehended, is one which frequently occurs in remote parts of the country. To be sure, it is only a form, the man merely taking her in his arms, and moving her gently three times. The writer of this, when young, saw it performed with his own eyes, as the saying is; but in his case the man was not a seventh son, for no such person could be procured. When this difficulty arises, any man who has the character of being lucky, provided he is not married to a red-haired wife, may be called in to give the three shakes. In other and more dangerous cases, Rose would send out persons to gather half a dozen heads of blasted barley; and having stripped them of the black fine powder with which they were covered, she would administer it in a little new milk, and this was always attended by the best effects. It is somewhat surprising that the whole Faculty should have adopted this singular medicine in cases of similar difficulty, for, in truth, it is that which is now administered under the more scientific name of *Ergot of Rye*.

In the case before us, the seventh son sustained his reputation for good luck. In about three quarters of an hour Dandy was called in "to kiss a strange young gintleman that wanted to see him." This was an agreeable ceremony to Dandy, as it always is, to catch the first glimpse of one's own first-born.

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On entering, he found Rose sitting beside the bed in all the pomp of authority and pride of success, bearing the infant in her arms, and dandling it up and down, more from habit than any necessity that then existed for doing so.

"Well," said she, "here we are, all safe and sound, God willin'; an' if you're not the father of as purty a young man as ever I laid eyes on, I'm not here. Corny Keho, come an' kiss your son, I say."

Corny advanced, somewhat puzzled whether to laugh or to cry, and taking the child up, with a smile, he kissed it five times—for that is the mystic number—and as he placed it once more in Rose's arms, there was a solitary tear on its cheek.

"Arra, go an' kiss your wife, man alive, an' tell her to have a good heart, an' to be as kind to all her fellow-creatures as God has been to her this night. It isn't upon this world the heart ought to be fixed, for we see how small a thing an' how short a time can take us out of it."

"Oh, bedad," said Dandy, who had now recovered the touch of feeling excited by the child, "it would be too bad if I'd grudge her a smack." He accordingly stooped, and kissed her; but, truth to confess, he did it with a very cool and business-like air. "I know," he proceeded, "that she'll have a heart like a jyant, now that the son is come."

"To be sure she will, an' she must; or if not, *I'll* play the sorra, an' break things. Well, well, let her get strength a bit first, an' rest and quiet; an' in the meantime get the groanin'-malt ready, until every one in the house drinks the health of the stranger. My sowl to happiness, but he's a born beauty. The nerra Keho of you all ever was the aiquails of what he'll be yet, plaise God. Throth, Corny, he has daddy's nose upon him, any how. Ay, you may laugh; but, faix, it's thrue. You may take with him, you may own to him, any where. Arra, look at that! My soul to happiness, if one egg's liker another! Eh, my posey! Where was it, alanna? Ay,

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you're there, my duck o' diamonds! Troth, you'll be the flower o' the flock, so you will. An' now, Mrs. Keho, honey, we'll lave you to yourself awhile, till we thrate these poor cratures of sarvints; the likes o' them oughtn't to be overlooked; an', indeed, they did feel a great dale itself, poor things, about you; an', moreover, they'll be longin' of coorse to see the darlin' here."

Mrs. Keho's mother and Rose superintended the birth-treat between them. It is unnecessary to say that the young men and girls had their own sly fun upon the occasion; and now that Dandy's apprehension of danger was over, he joined in their mirth with as much glee as any of them. This being over, they all retired to rest; and honest Mickey M'Sorley went home very *hearty*,* in consequence of Dandy's grateful sense of the aid he had rendered his wife. The next morning, Rose, after dressing the infant and performing all the usual duties that one expected from her, took her leave in these words:—

"Now, Mrs. Keho, God bless you an' yours, and take care of yourself. I'll see you again on Sunday next, when it's to be christened. Until then, throw out no dirty wather before sunrise or afther sunset; an' when Father Molloy is goin' to christen it, let Corny tell him not to forget to christen it *against the fairies*, an' thin it'll be safe. Good-bye, ma'am; an' look you to her, Mrs. Finnegan," said she, addressing her patient's mother, "an' *banaght lath* till I see all again."

The following Sunday morning, Rose paid an early visit to her patient, for, as it was the day of young Dandy's christening, her presence was considered indispensable. There is,

* Tipsy.

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besides, something in the appearance and bearing of a midwife upon those occasions which diffuses a spirit of light-heartedness not only through the immediate family, but also through all who may happen to participate in the ceremony, or partake of the good cheer. In many instances it is known that the very presence of a medical attendant communicates such a cheerful confidence to his patient, as, independently of any prescription, is felt to be a manifest relief. So it is with the midwife; with this difference, that she exercises a greater and more comical latitude of consolation than the doctor, although it must be admitted that she generally falls woefully short of that conventional dress with which we cover nudity of expression. No doubt many of her very choicest stock jokes, to carry on the metaphor, are a little too *fashionably* dressed to pass current out of the sphere in which they are used; but be this as it may, they are so traditional in character, and so humorous in conception, that we never knew the veriest prude to feel offended, or the morosest temperament to maintain its sourness, at their recital. Not that she is at all gross or unwomanly in any thing she may say, but there is generally in her apothegms a passing touch of fancy—a quick but terse vivacity of insinuation, at once so full of fun and sprightliness, and that truth which all know but few like to acknowledge, that we defy any one not irretrievably gone in some incurable melancholy to resist her humour. The moment she was seen approaching the house, every one in it felt an immediate elevation of spirits, with the exception of Mrs. Keho herself, who knew that wherever Rose had the arrangement of the bill of fare, there was sure to be what the Irish call "full an' plinty"—"lashins an' lavins"—a fact which made her groan in spirit at the bare contemplation of such waste and extravagance. She was indeed a woman of a very un-Irish heart—so sharp in her temper and so penurious in soul, that one would imagine her veins were filled with vinegar instead of blood.

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"*Banaght Dheah in shoh*" (the blessing of God be here), Rose exclaimed on entering.

"*Banaght Dheah agus Murra ghuid*" (the blessing of God and the Virgin on you), replied Corny, "an' you're welcome, Rose, ahagur."

"I know that, Corny. Well, how are we?—how is my son?"

"Begarra, thrivin' like a pair o' throopers."

"Thank God for it! Hav'n't we a good right to be grateful to him any way? An' is my little man to be christened to-day?"

"Indeed he is—the gossips will be here presently, an' so will *her* mother. But, Rose, dear, will you take the ordherin' of the aitin' an' drinkin' part of it?—you're betther up to these things than we are, an' so you ought, of coorse. Let there be no want of any thing; an' if there's an overplush, sorra may care; there'll be poor mouths enough about the door for whatever's left. So, you see, keep never mindin' any hint *she* may give you—you know she's a little o' the closest; but no matther. Let there, as I said, be enough an' to spare."

"Throth, there spoke your father's son, Corny: all the ould dacency's not dead yet, any how. Well, I'll do my best. But she's not fit to be up, you know, an' of coorse, can't disturb us." The expression of her eye could not be misunderstood as she uttered this. "I see," said Corny—"devil a betther, if you manage that, all's right."

"An' now I must go in, till I see how she an' my son's gettin' an: that's always my first start; bekase you know, Corny, honey, that *their* health goes afore every thing."

Having thus undertaken the task required of her, she passed into the bedroom of Mrs. Keho, whom she found determined to be up, in order, as she said, to be at the head of her own table.

"Well, alanna, if you must, you must; but in the name of

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goodness I wash my hands out of the business teetotally. Dshk, dshk, dshk! Oh, wurra! to think of a woman in your state risin' to sit at her own table! That I may never, if I'll see it, or be about the place at all. If you take your life by your own wilfulness, why, God forgive you; but it mustn't be while I'm here. Howandiver, since you're bent on it, why, give me the child, an' afore I go, any how, I may as well dress it, poor thing! The heavens pity it—my little man—eh?—where was it?—cheep—that's it, a ducky; stretch away. Aye stretchin' an' thrivin' an, my son! O, thin, wurra! Mrs. Keho, but it's you that ought to ax God's pardon for goin' to do what might lave that darlin' o' the world an orphan, may be. Arrah be the vestments, if I can have patience wid you. May God pity you, my child. If any thing happened your mother, what 'ud become of you, and what 'ud become of your poor father this day? Dshk, dshk, dshk!" These latter sounds, exclamations of surprise and regret, were produced by striking the tongue against that part of the inward gum which covers the roots of the upper teeth.

"Indeed, Rose," replied her patient, in her sharp, shrill, quick voice, "I'm able enough to get up; if I don't, we'll be harrished. Corny's a fool, an' it 'll be only rap an' rive wid every one in the place."

"Wait, ma'am, if you plaise.—Where's his little barrow? Ay, I have it.—Wait, ma'am, if you plaise, till I get the child dressed, an' I'll soon take myself out o' this. Heaven presarve us! I have seen the like o' this afore—ay have I—where it was as clear as crystal *that there was somethin' over them*—ay, over them that took their own way as you're doin'."

"But if I don't get up"——

"Oh, by all manes, ma'am—by all manes. I suppose you have a laise of your life, that's all. It's what I wish I could get."

"An' must I stay here in bed all day, an' me able to rise, an' sich wilful waste as will go an too?"

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"Remember you're warned. This is your first babby, God bless it, an' spare you both. But, Mrs. Keho, does it stand to raison that you're as good a judge of these things as a woman like me, that it's my business? I ax you that, ma'am."

This poser in fact settled the question, not only by the reasonable force of the conclusion to be derived from it, but by the cool authoritative manner in which it was put.

"Well," said the other, "in that case, I suppose, I must give in. You ought to know best."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am; have you found it out at last? No, but you ought to put your two hands undher my feet for previntin' you from doin' what you intinded. That I may never sup sorrow, but it was as much as your life was worth. Compose yourself; I'll see that there's no waste, and that's enough. Here, hould my son—why, thin, isn't he the beauty o' the world, now that he has got his little dress upon him?—till I pin up this apron across the windy; the light's too strong for you. There now: the light's apt to give one a head-ache when it comes in full bint upon the eyes that way. Come, alanna, come an now, till I show you to your father an' them all. Wurra, thin, Mrs. Keho, darlin'," (this was said in a low confidential whisper, and in a playful wheedling tone which baffles all description), "wurra, thin, Mrs. Keho, darlin', but it's he that's the proud man, the proud Corny, this day. Rise your head a little—aisy—there now, that'll do—one kiss to my son, now, before he laives his mammy, he says, for a weeny while, till he pays his little respects to his daddy an' to all his frinds, he says, an' thin he'll come back to mammy agin—to his own little bottle, he says."

Young Corny soon went the rounds of the whole family, from his father down to the little herd-boy who followed and took care of the cattle. Many were the jokes which passed between the youngsters on this occasion—jokes which have been registered by such personages as Rose, almost in every

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family in the kingdom, for centuries, and with which most of the Irish people are too intimately and thoroughly acquainted to render it necessary for us to repeat them here.

Rose now addressed herself to the task of preparing breakfast, which, in honour of the happy event, was nothing less than "tay, white bread, and Boxty," with a glass of potheen to sharpen the appetite. As Boxty, however, is a description of bread not generally known to our readers, we shall give them a sketch of the manner in which this Irish luxury is made. A basket of the best potatoes is got, which are washed and peeled raw; then is procured a tin grater, on which they are grated; the water is then shired off them, and the macerated mass is put into a clean sheet, or table-cloth, or bolster-cover. This is caught at each end by two strong men, who twist it in opposite directions, until the contortions drive up the substance into the middle of the sheet, &c.; this of course expels the water also; but lest the twisting should be insufficient for that purpose, it is placed, like a cheese-cake, under a heavy weight, until it is properly dried. They then knead it into cakes, and bake it on a pan or griddle; and when eaten with butter, we can assure our readers that it is quite delicious.

The hour was now about nine o'clock, and the company asked to the christening began to assemble. The gossips, or sponsors, were four in number; two of them wealthy friends of the family, that had never been married, and the two others a simple country pair, who were anxious to follow in the matrimonial steps of Corny and his wife. The rest were, as usual, neighbours, relatives, and *cleaveens*, to the amount of sixteen or eighteen persons, men, women, and children, all dressed in their best apparel, and disposed to mirth and friendship. Along with the rest was Bob M'Cann, the fool, who, by the way, could smell out a good dinner with as keen a nostril as the wisest man in the parish could boast of, and who on such

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occasions carried turf and water in quantities that indicated the supernatural strength of a Scotch brownie rather than that of a human being. Bob's qualities, however, were well proportioned to each other, for, truth to say, his appetite was equal to his strength, and his cunning to either.

Corny and Mrs. Moan were in great spirits, and indeed we might predicate as much of all who were present. Not a soul entered the house who was not brought up by Corny to an out-shot room, as a private mark of his friendship, and treated to an underhand glass of as good potheen "as ever went down the red lane," to use a phrase common among the people. Nothing upon an occasion naturally pleasant gives conversation a more cheerful impulse than this; and the consequence was, that in a short time the scene was animated and mirthful to an unusual degree.

Breakfast at length commenced in due form. Two bottles of whiskey were placed upon the table, and the first thing done was to administer another glass to each guest.

"Come, neighbours," said Corny, "we must dhrink the good woman's health before we ate, especially as it's the first time, any how."

"To be sure they will, achora, an' why not? An' if it's the first time, Corny, it won't be the last, plaise goodness! Musha! you're welcome, Mrs. M'Cann! and jist in time too"—this she said, addressing his mother-in-law, who then entered. "Look at this swaddy, Mrs. M'Cann; my soul to happiness, but he's fit to be the son of a lord. Eh, a pet? Where was my darlin'? Corny, let me dip my finger in the whiskey till I rub his gums wid it. That's my bully! Oh, the heavens love it; see how it puts the little mouth about lookin' for it agin. Throth you'll have the spunk in you yet, acushla, an' it's a credit to the Kehos you'll be, if you're spared, as you will, plaise the heavens!"

"Well, Corny," said one of the gossips, "here's a speedy

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uprise an' a sudden recovery to the good woman, an' the little sthranger's health, an' God bless the baker that gives thirteen to the dozen, any how!"

"Ay, ay, Paddy Rafferty, you'll have your joke any way; an' throth you're welcome to it, Paddy; if you weren't, it isn't standin' for young Corny you'd be to-day."

"Thrue enough," said Rose, "an' by the dickens, Paddy isn't the boy to be long undher an obligation to any one. Eh, Paddy, did I help you there, avick? Aisy, childre; you'll smother my son if you crush about him that way." This was addressed to some of the youngsters, who were pressing round to look at and touch the infant.

"It won't be my fault if I do, Rose," said Paddy, slyly eyeing Peggy Betagh, then betrothed to him, who sat opposite, her dark eyes flashing with repressed humour and affection. Deafness, however, is sometimes a very convenient malady to young ladies, for Peggy immediately commenced a series of playful attentions to the unconscious infant, which were just sufficient to excuse her from noticing this allusion to their marriage. Rose looked at her, then nodded comically to Paddy, shutting both her eyes, by way of a wink, adding aloud, "Throth you'll be the happy boy, Paddy; an' woe betide you if you aren't the sweetest end of a honeycomb to her. Take care an' don't bring *me* upon you. Well, Peggy, never mind, alanna; who has a betther right to his joke than the dacent boy that's — aisy, childre: saints above! but ye'll smother the child, so you will. Where did I get him, Dinney? sure I brought him as a present to Mrs. Keho; I never come but I bring a purty little babby along wid me—than the dacent boy, dear, that's soon to be your lovin' husband? Arrah, take your glass, acushla; the sorra harm it 'll do you."

"Bedad, I'm afeard, Mrs. Moan. What if it 'ud get into my head, an' me's to stand for my little godson? No, bad scran to me if I could—faix, a glass 'ud be too many for me."

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"It's not more than half filled, dear; but there's sense in what the girl says, Dandy, so don't press it an her."

In the brief space allotted to us we could not possibly give any thing like a full and correct picture of the happiness and hilarity which prevailed at the breakfast in question. When it was over, they all prepared to go to the parish chapel, which was distant at least a couple of miles, the midwife staying at home to see that all the necessary preparations were made for dinner. As they were departing, Rose took the Dandy aside, and addressed him thus:

"Now, Dandy, when you see the priest, tell him that it is your wish, above all things, 'that he should christen it against the fairies.' If you say that, it's enough. And Peggy, achora, come here. You're not carryin' that child right, alanna; but you'll know betther yet, plaise goodness. No, avillish, don't keep its little head so closely covered wid your cloak; the day's a burnin' day, glory be to God, an' the Lord guard my child; sure the laist thing in the world, where there's too much hait, 'ud smother my darlin'. Keep its head out farther, and just shade its little face that way from the sun. Och, will I ever forget the Sunday whin poor Molly M'Guigan wint to take Patt Feasthalagh's child from under her cloak to be christened, the poor infant was a corpse; an' only that the Lord put it into my head to have it privately christened, the father an' mother's hearts would break. Glory be to God! Mrs. Duggan, if the child gets cross, dear, or misses any thing, act the mother by him, the little man. Eh, alanna! where was it? Where was my duck o' diamonds—my little Con Roe? My own sweety little ace o' hearts—eh, alanna! Well, God keep it, till I see it again, the jewel!"

Well, the child was baptized by the name of his father, and the persons assembled, after their return from chapel, lounged about Corny's house, or took little strolls in the neighbourhood, until the hour of dinner. This of course was much more

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convivial, and ten times more vociferous, than the breakfast, cheerful as that meal was. At dinner they had a dish, which we believe is, like the Boxty, peculiarly Irish in its composition: we mean what is called *sthilk*. This consists of potatoes and beans, pounded up together in such a manner that the beans are not broken, and on this account the potatoes are well champed before the beans are put into them. This is dished in a large bowl, and a hole made in the middle of it, into which a *miscaun* or roll of butter is thrust, and then covered up until it is melted. After this, every one takes a spoon and digs away with his utmost vigour, dipping every morsel into the well of butter in the middle, before he puts it into his mouth. Indeed, from the strong competition which goes forward, and the rapid motion of each right hand, no spectator could be mistaken in ascribing the motive of their proceedings to the principle of the old proverb, devil take the hindmost. *Sthilk* differs from another dish made of potatoes in much the same way, called *colcannon*. If there were beans, for instance, in *colcannon*, it would be *sthilk*. This practice of many persons eating out of the same dish, though Irish, and not cleanly, is of very old antiquity. Christ himself mentions it at the Last Supper. Let us hope, however, that, like the old custom which once prevailed in Ireland, of several persons drinking at meals out of the same mether, the usage we speak of will soon be replaced by one of more cleanliness and individual comfort.

After dinner the whiskey began to go round, for in these days punch was a luxury almost unknown to the class we are writing of. It fact, nobody there knew how to make it but the midwife, who wisely kept the secret to herself, aware that if the whiskey were presented to them in such a palatable shape, they would not know when to stop, and she herself might fall short of the snug bottle that is usually kept as a treat for those visits which she continues to pay during the convalescence of her patients.

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"Come, Rose" said Corny, who was beginning to soften fast, "it's your turn now to thry a glass of what never seen wather." "I'll take the glass, Dandy—'deed will I—but the thruth is, I never dhrink it *hard*. No, but I'll jist take a drop o' hot wather an' a grain o' sugar, an' scald it; that an' as much carraway seeds as will lie upon a sixpence does me good: for, God help me, the stomach isn't at all sthrong wid me, in regard of bein' up so much at night, an' deprived of my nathural rest."

"Rose," said one of them, "is it thrue that you war called out one night, an' brought blindfoulded to some grand lady belongin' to the quality?"

"Wait, avick, till I make a drop o' *wan-grace** for the misthress, poor thing; an', Corny, I'll jist throuble you for about a thimbleful o' spirits to take the smell o' the wather off it. The poor crature, she's a little weak still, an' indeed it's wondherful how she stood it out; but, my dear, God's good to his own, an' fits the back to the burden, praise be to his name!"

She then proceeded to scald the drop of spirits for herself, or, in other words, to mix a good tumbler of ladies' punch, making it, as the phrase goes, hot, strong, and sweet—not forgetting the carraways, to give it a flavour. This being accomplished, she made the wan-grace for Mrs. Keho, still throwing in a word now and then to sustain her part in the conversation, which was now rising fast into mirth, laughter, and clamour.

"Well, but, Rose, about the lady of quality, will you tell us that?"

"Oh, many a thing happened me as well worth tellin', if you go to that; but I'll tell it to you, childre, for sure the curiosity's nathural to yez. Why, I was one night at home

* A wan-grace is a kind of small gruel or meal-tea sweetened with sugar.

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an' asleep, an' I hears a horse's foot gallopin' for the bare life up to the door. I immediately put my head out, an' the horseman says, 'Are you Mrs. Moan?'

"'That's the name that's an me, your honour,' says myself.

"'Dress yourself thin,' says he, 'for you're sadly wanted; dress yourself, and mount behind me, for there's not a moment to be lost!' At the same time I forgot to say that his hat was tied about his face in sich a way that I couldn't catch a glimpse of it. Well, my deaf, we didn't let the grass grow undher our feet for about a mile or so. 'Now,' says he, 'you must allow yourself to be blindfoulded, an' its useless to oppose it, for it must be done. There's the character, maybe the life of a great lady at stake; so be quiet till I cover your eyes, or,' says he, lettin' out a great oath, 'it'll be worse for you. I'm a desperate man;' an' sure enough, I could feel the heart of him beatin' undher his ribs, as if it would burst in pieces. Well, my dears, what could I do in the hands of a man that was strong and desperate. So, says I, 'Cover my eyes an' welcome; only, for the lady's sake, make no delay.' Wid that he dashed his spurs into the poor horse, an' he foamin' an' smokin' like a lime-kiln already. Any way, in about half an hour I found myself in a grand bedroom; an' jist as I was put into the door, he whispers me to bring the child to him in the next room, as soon as it would be born. Well, sure I did so, afther lavin' the mother in a fair way. But what 'ud you have of it?—the first thing I see, lyin' an the table, was a purse of money an' a case o' pistols. Whin I looked at him, I thought the devil, Lord guard us! was in his face, he looked so black and terrible about the brows. 'Now, my good woman,' says he, 'so far you've acted well, but there's more to be done yet. Take your choice of these two,' says he, 'this purse, or the contents o' one o' these pistols, as your reward. You must murdher the child upon the spot.' 'In the name of God an' his Mother, be you man or devil, I defy you,' says I; 'no innocent

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blood 'll ever be shed by these hands.' 'I'll give you ten minutes,' says he, 'to put an end to that brat there;' an' wid that he cocked one o' the pistols. My dears, I had nothin' for it but to say *in* to myself a *pather* an' *ave* as fast as I could, for I thought it was all over wid me. However, glory be to God! the prayers gove me great strinth, an' I spoke stoutly. 'Whin the king of Jerusalem,' says I—'an' he was a greater man than ever you'll be—whin the king of Jerusalem ordhered the midwives of Aigyp to put Moses to death, they wouldn't do it, and God presarved them in spite of him, king though he was,' says I; 'an' from that day to this it was never known that a midwife took away the life of the babe she aided into the world—No, an' I'm not goin' to be the first that'll do it.' 'The time is out,' says he, puttin' the pistol to my ear, 'but I'll give you one minute more.' 'Let me go to my knees first,' says I; 'an' now may God have mercy on my sowl, for, bad as I am, I'm willin' to die, sooner than commit murdher an the innocent.' He gave a start as I spoke, an' threw the pistol down. 'Ay,' said he, 'an the innocent—an the innocent—that is thrue! But you are an extraordinary woman: you have saved that child's life, and previnted me from committing two great crimes, for it was my intintion to murder you afther you had murdhered it.' I thin, by his ordhers, brought the poor child to its mother, and whin I came back to the room, 'Take that purse,' says he, 'an' keep it as a reward for your honesty.' 'Wid the help o' God,' says I, 'a penny of it will never come into my company, so it's no use to ax me.' 'Well,' says he, 'afore you lave this, you must swear not to mintion to a livin' sowl what has happened this night, for a year and a day.' It didn't signify to me whether I mintioned it 'or not, so being jack-indifferent about it, I tuck the oath, and kept it. He thin bound my eyes agin, hoisted me up behind him, an' in a short time left me at home. Indeed, I wasn't the betther o' the start it tuck out o' me for as good as six weeks afther!"

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The company now began to grow musical; several songs were sung; and when the evening got farther advanced, a neighbouring fiddler was sent for, and the little party had a dance in the barn, to which they adjourned lest the noise might disturb Mrs. Keho, had they held it in the dwelling-house. Before this occurred, however, "the midwife's glass" went the round of the gossips, each of whom drank her health, and dropped some silver, at the same time, into the bottom of it. It was then returned to her, and with a smiling face she gave the following toast:—"Health to the parent stock! So long as it thrives, there will always be branches! Corny Keho, long life an' good health to you an' yours! May your son live to see himself as happy as his father! Youngsters, here's that you may follow a good example! The company's health in general I wish; an' Paddy Rafferty, that you may never have a blind child but you'll have a lame one to lead it! ha! ha! ha! What's the world widout a joke? I must see the good woman an' my little son afore I go; but as I won't follow yez to the barn, I'll bid yez good night, neighbours, an' the blessin' of Rose Moan be among yez!"

And so also do we take leave of our old friend, Rose Moan, the Irish Midwife, who, we understand, took her last leave of the world only about a twelvemonth ago.

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TALBOT AND GAYNOR,

THE IRISH PIPERS.

Those who minister to amusement are every where popular characters, and fully as much so in Ireland as in other countries. Here, amongst the people at large, no sort of person is more kindly regarded than the wandering fiddler or piper, two classes of artists who may be said to have the whole business of keeping Paddy in good humour upon their shoulders. The piper is especially a favourite in the primitive provinces of Munster and Connaught. In Leinster they are not so common; and in the North may be described as rare, though I am not sure but that, for this very reason, they are as welcome in Ulster as in the other provinces, their notes producing an impression which is agreeable in proportion to its novelty.

Of course it is but natural that there should exist a striking resemblance between the respective habits and modes of life which characterize the fiddler and the piper; and of the latter, as well as the former, it may be observed, that, although most of his associations are drawn from the habits of the people, in contradistinction to those of the higher classes, yet it is unquestionably true that he is strongly imbued with the lingering remains of that old feudal spirit which has now nearly departed from the country. Even although generally neglected by the gentry, and almost utterly overlooked by the nobility, yet it is a melancholy but beautiful trait of "the old feeling," which prompts him always to speak of them with respect and deference. He will admit, indeed, that there is a degeneration;

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that "the good ould stock is gone;" and that "the big house is not what it used to be, whin the square's father would bring him into the parlour before all the quality, and make him play his two favourite tunes of the *Fox-Hunther's Jig* and the *Hare in the Corn*. Instead o' that, the sorra ha'porth now will sarve them but a kind of musical coffin, that they call a pianna thirty, or forty, or something that way, that to hear it 'ud make a dog sthrike his father, if he didn't behave himself."

This is the utmost length to which he carries his censure, and even this is uttered "more in sorrow than in anger." On the contrary, nothing can be more amusing than the simple and complacent pride with which he informs his hearers that, "as he passed the big house, the young square brought him in—an' it's himself that knows what the good ould smack o' the pipes is, an' more betoken, so he ought—an' kind father for him to do so—it's the ould square himself that had the true Irish relish for them. I played him all his father's favourites, both in the light way and in the sorrowful. Whin I was done, he slipped five shillings into my hand. 'Take this,' said he, 'for the sake o' thim that's gone, an' of the ould times.' He spoke low, an' in a hurry, as if his heart was *in* what he said; an' somehow I felt a tear on my cheek at the time; for it is a sorrowful thing to think how the blessed ould airs of our counthry—the only ones that go to the heart—are now so little known an' thought of, that a fashionable lady of the present day would feel ashamed to acknowledge them, or play them in company. Fareer gair!—it's a bad sign of the times, any how—may God mend them!"

The Irish piper, from the necessary monotony of his life, is generally a man of much simplicity of character—not, however, without a cast of humour, which is at once single-minded and shrewd. His little jealousies and heart-burnings—and he has his share—form the serious evils of his life; but it is remarkable

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that scarcely in a single instance are these indulged in at the expense of the agreeable fiddler, who is by no means looked upon as a rival. Not so his brother piper; for, in truth, the high and doughty spirit of competition by which they are animated, never passes out of their own class, but burns with heroic rage amongst themselves. The lengths to which this spirit has been frequently carried, are ludicrous almost beyond belief. The moment a piper's reputation is established on his beat, that moment commences his misery. Those from the neighbouring beats assail him by challenges that contain any thing but principles of harmony. Sometimes, it is true, they are cunning enough to come disguised to hear him; and if they imagine that a trial of skill is not likely to redound to their credit, they slink off without allowing any one, unless some particular confidant, to become cognizant of their secret.

These comical contests were, about forty or fifty years ago, much more frequent than they have been of late. In the good old times, however, when the farmers of Ireland brewed their own beer, and had whiskey for a shilling a quart, the challenges, defeats, escapes, and pursuits, which took place between persons of this class, were rich in dramatic effect, and afforded great amusement to both the gentry and the people. I remember hearing the history of a chase, in which a piper named Sullivan pursued a rival for eighteen months through the whole province of Munster before he caught him, and all in order to ascertain, by a trial of skill, whether his antagonist was more entitled to have the epithet "great" perfixed to his name than he himself. It appears that the friends and admirers of the former were in the habit of calling him "the Great Piper Reillaghan," a circumstance which so completely roused the aspiring soul of his opponent, that he declared he would never rest, night or day, until he stripped him of the epithet "great" and transferred it to his own name. He was beaten, however, and that by a manœuvre of an extraordinary kind.

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Reillaghan offered to play against him while drunk—Sullivan to remain sober.

Sullivan, thrown off his guard, and anxious under *any* circumstances to be able to *boast* of a victory over such an antagonist, agreed, and was consequently overcome; the truth being, that his opponent, like Carolan, when composing on the harp, was never able properly to distinguish himself as a performer unless when under the inspiration of whiskey.

Sullivan, not at all aware of the trick that the other had played upon him, of course took it for granted that, as he had stood no chance with Reillaghan when drunk, he must have a still less one in his sobriety; and the consequence was, that the next morning it was found he had taken leave in the course of the night.

There was some years ago, playing in the taverns of Dublin, a blind piper named Talbot, whose performance was singularly powerful and beautiful. This man, though blind from his infancy, possessed mechanical genius of a high order, and surprisingly delicate and exact manipulation, not merely as a musician but as a mechanic. He used to perform in Ladly's tavern in Capel-street, where he arrived every night about eight o'clock, and played till twelve, or, as the case might be, one. He was very social, and, when drawn out, possessed much genuine Irish humour and rich conversational powers. Sometimes, at a late period of the night, he was prevailed upon to attach himself to a particular party of pleasant fellows, who remained after the house was closed, to enjoy themselves at full swing. Then it was that Talbot shone, not merely as a companion but as a performer. The change in his style and manner of playing was extraordinary: the spirit, the power, humour, and pathos which he infused into his execution, were observed by every one; and when asked to account for so remarkable a change, his reply was, "My Irish heart is warmed; I'm not now playing for money, but to please myself."

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"But could you not play as well during the evening, Talbot, if you wished, as you do now?"

"No, if you were to hang me. My heart must get warmed, and Irish—I must be as I am this minute."

This, indeed, was very significant, and strongly indicative of the same genius which distinguished Neil Gow, Carolan, and other eminent musicians.

Talbot, though blind, used to employ his leisure hours in tuning and stringing organs and pianos, and mending almost every description of musical instrument that could be named. His own pipes, which he called the "grand pipes," were at least eight feet long; and for beauty of appearance, richness, and delicacy of workmanship, surpassed any thing of the kind that could be witnessed; and when considered as the production of his own hands, were indeed entitled to be ranked as an extraordinary natural curiosity. Talbot played before George IV., and appeared at most of the London theatres, where his performances were received with the most enthusiastic applause. In person, Talbot was a large portly-looking man, red faced, and good-looking, though strongly marked by traces of the small-pox. He always wore a blue coat, fully made, with gilt buttons, and had altogether the look of what we call in Ireland a well-dressed *badagh*,* or half-sir, which means a kind of gentleman-farmer.

His pipes, indeed, were a very wonderful instrument, or rather combination of instruments, being so complicated that no one could play upon them but himself. The tones which he brought out of them might be imagined to proceed from almost every instrument in an orchestra—now resembling the sweetest and most attenuated notes of the finest Cremona violin, and again the deep and solemn diapason of the organ.

* *Badagh* signifies a churl, and was originally applied as a word of offence to the English settlers. The offensive meaning, however, is not now *always* attached to it, although it often is.

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Like every Irish performer of talent that we have met with, he always preferred the rich old songs and airs of Ireland to every other description of music; and when lit up into the enthusiasm of his profession and his love of country, he has often deplored, with tears in his sightless eyes, the inroads which modern fashion had made, and was making, upon the good old spirit of the by-gone times. Nearly the last words I ever heard from his lips were highly touching, and characteristic of the man as well as the musician: "If we forget our own old music," said he, "what is there to remember in its place?"—words alas! which are equally fraught with melancholy and truth.

The man, however, who ought to sit as the true type and representative of the Irish piper, is he whose whole life is passed among the peasantry, with the exception of an occasional elevation to the lord's hall or the squire's parlour—who is equally conversant with the Irish and English languages—has neither wife nor child, house nor home, but circulates from one village or farm-house to another, carrying mirth, amusement, and a warm welcome with him, wherever he goes, and filling the hearts of the young with happiness and delight. The true Irish piper must wear a frieze coat, corduroy breeches, grey woollen stockings, smoke tobacco, drink whiskey, and take snuff; for it is absolutely necessary, from his peculiar position among the people, that he should be a walking encyclopædia of Irish social usages. And so he generally is; for to the practice and cultivation of these the simple tenor of his inoffensive life is devoted.

The most perfect specimen of this class we ever were acquainted with, was a blind man known by the name of "Piper Gaynor." His beat extended through the county of Louth, and occasionally through those of Meath and Monaghan. Gaynor was precisely such a man as I have just described, both as to dress, a knowledge of English and Irish, and a thorough feeling of all those mellow old tints, which an incipient

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change in the spirit of Irish society threatened even *then* to obliterate. I have said he was blind, but, unlike Talbot's, his face was smooth; and his pale placid features, while playing on his pipes, were absolutely radiant with enthusiasm and genius. He was a widower, and had won one of the fairest and most modest girls in the rich agricultural county of Louth, in spite of the competition and rivalry of many wealthy and independent suitors. But no wonder; for who could hear his magic performances without at once surrendering the whole heart and feelings to the almost preternatural influence of this miraculous enchanter? Talbot?—no, no!—after hearing Gaynor, the very remembrance of the music which proceeded from the "grand pipes" was absolutely indifferent. And yet the pipes on which he played were the meanest in appearance you could imagine, and in point of size the smallest I ever saw. It is singular, however, but no less true, that we can scarcely name a celebrated Irish piper whose pipes were not known to be small, old-looking, greasy, and marked by the stains and dinges which indicate an indulgence in the habits of convivial life.

Many a distinguished piper have we heard, but never at all any whom we could think for a moment of comparing with Gaynor. Unlike Talbot, it mattered not when or where he played; his ravishing notes were still the same, for he possessed the power of utterly abstracting his whole spirit into his music, and any body who looked upon his pale and intellectual countenance, could perceive the lights and shadows of the Irish heart flit over it, with a change and rapidity which nothing but the soul of genius could command.

Gaynor, though comparatively unknown to any kind of fame but a local one, was yet not unknown to himself. In truth, though modest, humble, and unassuming in his manners, he possessed the true pride of genius. For instance, though willing to play in a respectable farmer's house for the amusement of the family, he never could be prevailed on to play at

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a *common dance;* and his reasons, which I have often heard him urge, were such as exhibit the spirit and intellect of the man. "*My music,*" said he, "isn't for *the feet* or *the floor,* but for *the ear* and *the heart;* you'll get plenty of *foot pipers,* but I'm none o' them."

I will now give a brief sketch of the last evening I ever spent in his society; and as some of his observations bore slightly upon Scotch music, they may probably be perused with the more interest by Caledonian readers.

He was seated, when I entered, at the spacious hearth of a wealthy farmer in the neighbourhood, surrounded by large chests, clean settles, and an ample dresser, whose well-scoured pewter reflected the dancing blaze of a huge turf fire. The ruddy farmer and his comely wife were placed opposite to him, their family of sons and daughters in a wide circle at a due distance, whilst behind, on the settles, were the servant men and maids, with several of the neighbours, both young and old, some sitting on chairs, and others leaning against the dresser, the tables, and the meal-chests. Within the chimney-brace depended large sides and flitches of fat bacon, and dark smoke-dried junks of hung beef; presenting altogether that agreeable manifestation of abundance, which gives such a cheerful sense of solid comfort to the inmates of a substantial farmer's house.

When I made my appearance in the kitchen, he was putting a tobacco-pipe into his mouth, but held it back for a moment, and exclaimed, "I ought to know *that* foot!"—after which he extended his hand, and asked me by name how I did. He then sat a while in silence—for such was his habit—and having "sucked his *doodeen,*" as they say, he began to blow his bellows, and played *Scots wha hae.* When he had finished it, "Well," I observed, "what a fine piece of martial music that is!"

"No, no," he replied, shaking his head, "there's more tears than blood in it. It's too sorrowful for war; play it as you will, it's not the thing to *rise* the heart, but to sink it."

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"But what do you think, Gaynor, of the Scotch music in general?"

"Would you have me to spake ill of my own?" he replied, with a smile; "sure, they had it from uz."

"Well, even so; they have not made a bad use of it."

"God knows they haven't," he replied; "the Scotch airs—many o' them—*is the very breath of the heart itself.*"

Even then I was much struck with the force of this expression; but I was too young fully to perceive either its truth or beauty. The conversation then became general, and he addressed himself with a great deal of *naïvete* to the youngsters, who began to banter him on the subject of a second wife.

"How can *dark* men choose a wife, Mr. Gaynor?"

"God, avourneen, makes up in one sense what they want in another. 'Tis the ear, 'tis the ear!" continued he, with apparent emotion; "that's what will never desave you. It did not desave *me*, an' it never will desave any body—no, indeed!"

"Why, how do you prove that, Ned?"

"It isn't the song," continued Ned; "no, nor the laugh; for I *knewn* them that could sing like angels, and, to all appearance, were merry enough too, an' God forgive them, there was little but bittherness in them after all: but it's the every-day voice, aisy and natural; if there's sweetness in *that*, you may depind there's music in the heart it comes from; so that, as I said, childre, it's the ear that judges."

This, coming from a man who had not his sight, was indeed, very characteristic; and we certainly believe that the observation contains a great deal of moral truth—at least Shakspeare was certainly of the same opinion.

"Now, childre," said he, "hadn't we betther have a dance, and afther that I'll play all your favourites. So now, trim your heels for a dance. What's the world good for, if we don't take it aisy?"

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After playing the old bard's exquisite air, the youngsters, myself among the rest, joined in the dance. The punch being then introduced, a happy night was spent in chat, music, rich old legends, and traditions, principally furnished by Gaynor himself; who, in addition to his many social and amusing qualities, possessed in a high degree the free and fluent powers peculiar to the old Irish senachie.

Such is a very feeble and imperfect sketch of the Irish piper, a character whom his countrymen love and respect, and in every instance treat with the kindness and cordiality due to a relation. Indeed, the musicians of Ireland are as harmless and inoffensive a class of persons as ever existed; and there can be no greater proof of this than the very striking fact, that, in the criminal statistics of the country, the name of an Irish piper or fiddler, &c., has scarcely, if ever, been known to appear.

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FRANK FINNEGAN,

THE FOSTER BROTHER.

THERE is scarcely a trait of human nature involved in more mystery, or generally less understood, than the singular strength of affection which binds the humble peasant of Irish life to his foster-brother, and more especially if the latter be a person of rank or consideration. This anomalous attachment, though it may to a certain extent be mutual, is nevertheless very seldom known to be equal in strength between the parties. Experience has sufficiently proved to us, that whilst instances of equality in feeling have been known to characterize it, the predominant power of its spirit has always been found to exist in the person of the humbler party. How to account for this would certainly require a more philosophical acquaintance with human nature than has fallen to our lot; we must therefore be content to know that the fact is precisely as we have stated it. Irish history and tradition furnish us with sufficient materials on which to ground clear and distinct proofs that the attachment of habit and contiguity in these instances far transcends that of natural affection itself. It is very seldom that one brother will lay down his life for another, and yet instances of such high and heroic sacrifices have occurred in the case of the foster-brother, whose affection has thus not unfrequently triumphed over death itself. It is certainly impossible to impute this wild but indomitable attachment to the force of domestic feeling, because, whilst we maintain that the domestic affections in Ireland are certainly stronger than those of any other country in the world, still instances of this

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inexplicable devotion have occurred in the persons of those in whom the domestic ties were known to be very feeble. It is true, there are many moral anomalies in the human heart with which we are as yet but imperfectly acquainted; and as they arise from some wayward and irregular combination of its impulses, that operate independently of any known principles of action, it is not likely that we shall ever thoroughly understand them. There is another peculiarity in Irish feeling, which, as it is analogous to this, we cannot neglect to mention it. We allude to the *Parisheen*, a term which we must explain at further length to our readers. When the Dublin Foundling Hospital was in existence, the poor infants whom an unhappy destiny consigned to that gloomy and withering institution, were transmitted to different parts of the country, to be nursed by the wives of the lower classes of the peasantry—such as day-labourers, cottiers, and small farmers, who cultivated from three to six or eight acres of land. These children were generally, indeed almost always, called Parisheens—a word which could be properly applied only to such as, having no known parents, were supported by the parish in which they happened to be born. It was transferred to the Foundlings, however; although, with the exception of the metropolis, which certainly paid a parish tax for their maintenance, they were principally supported by a very moral act of parliament, which, by the wise provision of a large grant, held out a very liberal bounty to profligacy. At all events, the opprobrious epithet of Parisheen was that usually fixed upon them.

Now, of all classes of our fellow-creatures, one might almost naturally suppose that those deserted and forsaken beings would be apt, consigned as they uniformly were to the care of mercenary strangers, to experience neglect, ill-treatment, or even cruelty itself; and yet, honour be to the generous hearts and affectionate feelings of our humble people, it has been proved, by the incontestible authority of a Commission

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expressly appointed to examine and report on the working of the very Hospital in question, that the care, affection, and tenderness with which these ill-fated creatures were treated by the nurses to whom they were given out, were equal, if not superior, to those which were bestowed upon their own children. Even when removed from these nurses to situations of incomparably more comfort—situations in which they were lodged, fed, and clothed, in a far superior manner—they have been known, in innumerable instances, to elope from their masters and mistresses, and return to their old abodes, preferring the indulgence of their affection, with poverty and distress, to any thing else that life could offer.

All this, however, was very natural and reasonable, for we know that even the domestic animal will love the hand that feeds him. But that which we have alluded to as constituting the strong analogy between it and the attachment of the foster-brother, is the well-known fact, that the affection of the children to the nurses, though strong and remarkable, was as nothing when compared with that which the nurses felt for them. This was proved by a force of testimony which no scepticism could encounter. The parting scenes between them were affecting, and in many instances agonizing, to the last degree. Nay, nurses have frequently come up to Dublin, and, with tears in their eyes, and in accents of the most unfeigned sorrow, begged that the orphans might be allowed to stay with them, undertaking, rather than part with them, that they would support them at their own expense. It would be very difficult to produce a more honourable testimony to the moral honesty, generosity, and exquisite kindness of heart which characterize our people, than the authentic facts we have just mentioned. They fell naturally in our way when treating of the subject which preceded them, and we could not, in justice to circumstances so beautiful and striking, much less in justice to the people themselves, pass them over in silence.

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We shall now relate a short story, illustrating the attachment of a foster-brother; but as we have reason to believe that the circumstances are true, we shall introduce fictitious names instead of real ones.

The rebellion of ninety-eight was just at its height when the incidents we are about to mention took place. A gentleman named Moore had a daughter remarkable for her beauty and accomplishments. Indeed, so celebrated had she become, that her health was always drunk as the toast of her native county. Many suitors she had, of course, but among the rest two were remarkable for their assiduous attentions to her, and an intense anxiety to secure her affections. Henry Irwin was a high loyalist, as was her own father, whose consent to gain the affections of his daughter had been long given to his young friend. The other, a young gentleman named Hewson, who in point of fact had already secured her affections, was, unfortunately, deeply involved in, or, we should rather say, an open leader on, the insurgent side. His principles having become known to Moore, as republican, for some time before the breaking out of the insurrection, he was, in consequence, forbidden the house, and warned against holding communication with any member of his family. He had succeeded, however, before this, by the aid of Miss Moore herself, who was aware of his principles, in placing as butler in her father's family his own foster-brother, Frank Finnegan—an arrangement which never would have been permitted, had Moore known of the peculiar bond of affection which subsisted between them. Of this, however, he was ignorant; and in admitting Finnegan into his family, he was not aware of the advantages he afforded to the proscribed suitor of his daughter. This interdiction, however, came too late for the purposes of prudence. Ere it was issued, Hewson and his daughter had exchanged vows of mutual affection; but the national outbreak which immediately ensued, by forcing Hewson to assume his place as an insurgent leader,

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appeared to have placed a barrier between him and her, which was naturally considered to be insurmountable. In the meantime, Moore himself, who was a local magistrate, and also a captain of yeomanry, took an extremely active part in quelling the insurrection, and in hunting down and securing the rebels. Nor was Irwin less zealous in following the footsteps of the man to whom he wished to recommend himself as his future son-in-law. They acted together; and so vigorous were the measures of the young loyalist, that the other felt it necessary in some instances to check the exuberance of his loyalty. This, however, was not known to the opposite party; for as Irwin always seemed to act under the instructions of his friend Moore, so was it obviously enough inferred that every harsh act and wanton stretch of authority which he committed, was either sanctioned or suggested by the other. The consequence was, that Moore became, if possible, more odious than Irwin, who was looked upon as a rash, hot-headed zealot; whilst the veteran was marked as a cool and wily old fox, who had ten times the cunning and cruelty of the senseless puppet he was managing. In this, it is unnecessary to say, they were egregiously mistaken.

In the meantime the rebellion went forward, and many acts of cruelty and atrocity were committed on both sides. Moore's house and family would have been attacked, and most probably murder and ruin might have visited him and his, were it not for the influence of Hewson with the rebels. Twice did the latter succeed, and on each occasion with great difficulty, in preventing him and his household from falling victims to the vengeance of the insurgents. Moore was a man of great personal courage, but apt to underrate the character and enterprize of those who were opposed to him. Indeed, his prudence was by no means on a par with his bravery or zeal, for he has often been known to sally out at the head of a party in quest of his enemies, and leave his own man-

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sion, and the lives of those who were in it, exposed and defenceless.

On one of those excursions it was that he chanced to capture a small body of the insurgents, headed by an intimate friend and distant relative of Hewson's. As the law at that unhappy period was necessarily quick in its operations, we need scarcely say, that, having been taken openly armed against the king and the constitution, they were tried and executed by the summary sentence of a court-martial. A deep and bloody vengeance was now sworn against him and his by the rebels, who for some time afterwards lay in wait for the purpose of retaliating in a spirit prompted by the atrocious character of the times.

Hewson's attachment to Moore's daughter, however, had been long known, and his previous interference on behalf of her father had been successful on that account only. Now, however, the plan of attack was laid without his cognizance, and that with the most solemn injunctions to every one concerned in it not to disclose their object to any human being not officially acquainted with it, much less to Hewson, who they calculated would once more take such steps as might defeat their sanguinary purpose. These arrangements having been made, matters were allowed to remain quiet for a little, until Moore should be off his guard; for we must observe here, that he had felt it necessary, after the execution of the captured rebels, to keep his house strongly and resolutely defended. The attack was therefore postponed until the apprehensions created by his recent activity should gradually wear away, and his enemies might with less risk undertake the work of bloodshed and destruction. The night at length was appointed on which the murderous attack must be made. All the dark details were arranged with a deliberation at which, removed as we now are from the sanguinary excitement of the times, the very soul shudders and gets sick. A secret, how-

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ever, communicated, even under the most solemn sanction, to a great number, stands a great chance of being no secret at all, especially during civil war, where so many interests of friendship, blood, and marriage, bind the opposing parties together, in spite of the public principles under which they act. Miss Moore's maid had a brother, for instance, who, together with several of his friends and relatives, being appointed to aid in the attack, felt anxious that she should not be present on that night, lest her acquaintance with them might be ultimately dangerous to the assailants. He accordingly sought an opportunity of seeing her, and in earnest language urged her to absent herself from her master's house on the appointed night. The girl was not much surprised at the ambiguity of his hints, for the truth was, that no person, man or woman, possessing common sense, could be ignorant of the state of the country, or of the evil odour in which Moore and Irwin, and all those who were active on the part of government, were held. She accordingly told him that she would follow his advice, and spoke to him in terms so shrewd and significant, that he deemed it useless to preserve further secrecy. The plot was thus disclosed, and the girl warned to leave the house, both for her own sake and for that of those who were to wreak their vengeance upon Moore and his family.

The poor girl, hoping that her master and the rest might fly from the impending danger, communicated the circumstances to Miss Moore, who forthwith communicated them to her father, who, again, instead of flying, took measures to collect about his premises, during the early part of the dreaded night, a large and well-armed force from the next military station. Now, it so happened that this girl, whose name was Baxter, had a leaning towards Hewson's foster-brother Finnegan, her fellow-servant, who in plain language was her accepted lover. If love will not show itself in a case of danger, it is good for nothing. We need scarcely say that Peggy

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Baxter, apprehensive of danger to her sweetheart, confided the secret to him also in the early part of the day of the attack. Finnegan was surprised, especially when he heard from Peggy that Hewson had been kept in ignorance of the whole design (for so her brother had told her), in consequence of his attachment to her young mistress. There was now no possible way of warding off such a calamity, unless by communicating with Hewson; and this, as Finnegan was a sound United Irishman, he knew he could do without any particular danger. He lost no time, therefore, in seeing him; and we need scarcely say that his foster-brother felt stunned and thunderstruck at the deed that was about to be perpetrated without his knowledge. Finnegan then left him, but ere he reached home, the darkness had set in, and on arriving, he sought the kitchen and its comforts, ignorant, as were indeed most of the servants, that the upper rooms and out-houses were literally crammed with fierce and well-armed soldiers.

Matters were now coming to a crisis. Hewson, aware that there was little time to be lost, collected a small party of his own immediate and personal friends, not one of whom, from their known attachment to him, had been, any more than himself, admitted to a knowledge of the attack upon Moore. Determined, therefore, to be beforehand with the others, he and they met at an appointed place, from whence they went quickly, and with as much secrecy as possible, to Moore's house, for the purpose not only of apprizing him of the fate to which he and his were doomed, but also with an intention of escorting him and all his family as far from his house as might be consistent with the safety of both parties. Our readers are of course prepared for the surprise and capture of honest Hewson and his friends, of whose friendly intentions they are aware. It is too true. Not expecting to find the house defended, they were unprepared for an attack or sally; and the upshot was, that in a few minutes two of them were shot, and most of the

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rest, among whom was Hewson, taken prisoners on the spot. Those who escaped communicated to the other insurgents an account of the strength with which Moore's house was defended; and the latter, instead of making an attempt to rescue their friends, abandoned the meditated attack altogether, and left Hewson and his party to their fate. A gloomy fate that was. Assertions and protestations of their innocence were all in vain. An insurgent party were expected to attack the house, and of course they came, headed by Hewson himself, who, as Moore said, no doubt intended to spare none of them but his daughter, and her, only, in order that she might become a rebel's wife. Irwin, too, his rival in love and his foe in politics, was on the court-martial, and what had he to expect? Death; and nothing but the darkness of the night prevented his enemies from putting it into immediate execution upon him and his companions.

Hewson maintained a dignified silence; and upon seeing his friends guarded from the hall, where they were now assembled, into a large barn, he desired to be placed along with them.

"No," said Moore; "if you are a rebel ten times over, you are a gentleman; you must not herd with them; and besides, Mr. Hewson, with great respect to you, we shall place you in a much safer place. In the highest room, in a house unusally high, we shall lodge you, out of which if you escape, we will say you are an innocent man. Frank Finnegan, show him and those two soldiers up to the observatory; get him refreshments, and leave him in their charge. Guard his door, men, for you shall be held responsible for his appearance in the morning."

The men, in obedience to these orders, escorted him to the door, outside of which was their station for the night. When Frank and he entered the observatory, the former gently shut the door, and, turning to his foster-brother, exclaimed in accents of deep distress, but lowering his voice, "There is not a moment to be lost; you must escape."

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"That is impossible," replied Hewson, "unless I had wings and could use them."

"We must try," returned Frank; "we can only fail—at the most they can only take your life, and that they'll do at all events."

"I know that," said Hewson, "and I am prepared for it."

"Hear me," said the other; "I will come up by and bye with refreshments, say in about half an hour; be you stripped when I come. We are both of a size; and as these fellows don't know either of us very well, I wouldn't say but you may go out in my clothes. I'll hear nothing," he added, seeing Hewson about to speak; "I am here too long, and these fellows might begin to suspect something. Be preparred when I come. Good bye, Mr. Hewson," he said aloud, as he opened the door; "in troth an' conscience I'm sorry to see you here, but that's the consequence of turnin' rebel against King George, an' glory to him—*soon and sudden*," he added in an undertone. "In about half an hour I'll bring you up some supper, sir. Keep a sharp eye on him," he whispered to the two soldiers, giving them at the same time a knowing and confidential wink; "these same rebels are like eels, an' will slip as aisily through your fingers —an' the devil's bitther one yez have in there;" and as he spoke, he pointed over his shoulder with his inverted thumb to the door of the observatory.

Much about the time he had promised to return, a crash was heard upon the stairs, and Finnegan's voice in a high key exclaiming, "The curse o' blazes on you for stairs, an' hell *presume* all the rebels in Europe, I pray heavens this night! There's my nose broke between you all!" He then stooped down, and in a torrent of bitter imprecations—all conveyed, however, in mock oaths—he collected and placed again upon the tray on which they had been, all the materials for Hewson's supper. He then ascended, and on presenting himself at the prisoner's door, the blood was copiously streaming from

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his nose. The soldiers—who by the way were yeomen—on seeing him, could not avoid laughing at his rueful appearance —a circumstance which seemed to nettle him a good deal. "Yez may laugh!" he exclaimed, "but I'd hould a wager I've shed more blood for his majesty this night than either of you ever did in your lives! May hell renounce all rebels any how!"

This only heightened their mirth, in the midst of which he entered Hewson's room; and ere the action could be deemed possible, they had exchanged clothes.

"Now," said he, "fly. Behind the garden Miss Moore is waitin' for you; she knows all. Take the bridle-road through the broad bog, an' get into Captain Corny's demesne. Take my advice, too, an' go both of you to America, if you can. But, aisy. God forgive me for pullin' you by the nose instead of shakin' you by the hand, an' me may never see you more."

The poor fellow's voice became unsteady with emotion, although the smile at his own humour was upon his face at the time.

"As I came in with a bloody nose," he proceeded, giving that of Hewson a fresh pull, "you know you must go out with one. An' now God's blessin' be with you! Think of one who loved you as none else did."

The next morning there was uproar, tumult, and confusion in the house of the old loyalist magistrate, when it was discovered that his daughter and the butler were not forthcoming. But when, on examining the observatory, it was ascertained that Finnegan was safe and Hewson gone, no language can describe the rage and fury of Moore, Irwin, and the military in general. Our readers may anticipate what occurred. The noble fellow was brought to the drum-head, tried, and sentenced to be shot where he stood; but ere the sentence was put into execution, Moore addressed him. "Now, Finnegan," said

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he, "I will get you off, if you tell us where Hewson and my daughter are. I pledge my honour publicly that I'll save your life, and get you a free pardon, if you enable us to trace and recover them."

"I don't know where they are," he replied, "but even if I did, I would not betray them."

"Think of what has been said to you," added Irwin. "I give you my pledge also to the same effect."

"Mr. Irwin," he replied, "I have but one word to say. When I did what I did, I knew very well that *my* life would go for *his;* an' I know that if he had thought so, he would be standin' now in my place. Put your sentence into execution; I'm prepared."

"Take five minutes," said Moore. "Give him up and live."

"Mr. Moore," said he, with a decision and energy which startled them all, "I AM HIS FOSTER-BROTHER."

This was felt to be sufficient; he stood at the appointed place, calm and unshrinking, and at the first discharge fell instantaneously dead.

Thus passed a spirit worthy of a place in a brighter page than that of our humble miscellany, and which, if the writer of this lives, shall be more adequately recorded.

Hewson, finding that the insurgent cause was becoming hopeless, escaped, after two or three other unsuccessful engagements, to America, instigated by the solicitations of his young wife. Old Moore died in a few years afterwards, but he survived his resentment, for he succeeded in reconciling the then government to his son-in-law, who returned to Ireland; and it was found by his will, much to the mortification of many of his relatives, that he had left the bulk of his property to Mrs. Hewson, who had always been his favourite child, and whose attachment to Hewson he had himself originally encouraged.

There are two records more connected with this transaction, with which we shall close. In a northern newspaper, dated

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some fifteen years afterwards, there occurs the following paragraph :—

"AFFAIR OF HONOUR—FATAL DUEL.—Yesterday morning, at the early hour of five o'clock, a duel was fought between A. Irwin, Esq. and J. Hewson, Esq., of Mooredale, the former of whom, we regret to say, fell by the second fire. We hope the words attributed to one of the parties are not correctly reported. '*The blood of Frank Finnegan is now avenged.*'"

The other record is to be found in the churchyard of——, where there is a handsome monument erected, with the following inscription :—

Sacred to the Memory of

FRANCIS FINNEGAN,

Whose Death presented an instance of the greatest Virtue of which Human Nature is capable—

That of laying down his Life for his Friend.

This Monument is erected to his Memory, by

JAMES HEWSON,

His Friend and Foster-Brother,

To save whose more unworthy life, he nobly sacrificed his own.

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TOM GRESSIEY,

THE IRISH SENACHIE.

The state of Irish society has changed so rapidly within the last thirty or forty years, that scarcely any one could believe it possible for the present generation to be looked upon in many things as the descendants of that which has immediately gone before it. The old armorial bearings of society which were empannelled upon the ancient manners of our country, now hang like tattered scutcheons over the tombs of customs and usages which sleep beneath them; and, unless rescued from the obliterating hand of time, scarcely a vestige of them will be left even to tradition itself. That many gross absurdities have been superseded by a social condition more enlightened and healthy, is a fact which must gratify every one who wishes to see the general masses actuated by those principles which follow in the train of knowledge and civilization. But at the same time it is undeniable that the simplicity which accompanied those old vestiges of harmless ignorance has departed along with them; and, in spite of education and science, we miss the old familiar individuals who stood forth as the representatives of manners, whose very memory touches the heart and affections more strongly than the hard creations of sterner but more salutary truths. For our own part, we have always loved the rich and ruddy twilight of the rustic hearth, where the capricious tongues of blazing light shoot out from between the kindling turf, and dance in vivid reflection in the well-scoured pewter and delft as they stand neatly arranged on the kitchen dresser—loved, did we say? ay, and ever pre-

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ferred it to philosophy, with all her light and fashion, with all her heartlessness and hypocrisy. For this reason it is, that whilst retracing, as it were, the steps of our early life, and bringing back to our memory the acquaintances of our youthful days, we feel our heart touched with melancholy and sorrow, because we know that it is like taking our last farewell of old friends whom we shall never see again, from whom we never experienced any thing but kindness, and whose time-touched faces were never turned upon us but with pleasure, and amusement, and affection.

In this paper it is not with the Senachie, whose name and avocations are associated with high and historical dignity, that we have any thing to do. Our sketches do not go very far beyond the manners of our own times; by which we mean that we paint or record nothing that is not remembered and known by those who are now living. The Senachie we speak of is the dim and diminished reflection of him who filled a distinct calling in a period that has long gone by. The regular Senachie—the herald and historian of individual families, the faithful genealogist of his long-descended patron—has not been in existence for at least a century and a half, perhaps two. He with whom we have to do is the humble old man who, feeling himself gifted with a strong memory for genealogical history, old family anecdotes, and legendary lore in general, passes a happy life in going from family to family, comfortably dressed and much respected—dropping in of a Saturday night without any previous notice, bringing eager curiosity and delight to the youngsters of the house he visits, and filling the sedate ears of the old with tales and legends, in which, perhaps, individuals of their own name and blood have in former ages been known to take a remarkable and conspicuous part.

Indeed, there is no country in the world where, from the peculiar features of its social and political changes, the chronicles of the Senachie would be more likely to produce such a

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powerful effect as in Ireland. When we consider that it was once a country of princes and chiefs, each of whom was followed and looked up to with such a spirit of feudal enthusiasm and devoted attachment as might naturally be expected from a people remarkable for the force of their affection and their power of imagination, it is not surprising that the man who, in a state of society which presented to the minds of so many nothing but the records of fallen greatness or the decay of powerful names, and the downfal of rude barbaric grandeur, together with the ruin of fanes and the prostration of religious institutions, each invested with some local or national interest—it is not surprising, we say, that such a man should be welcomed, and listened to, and honoured, with a feeling far surpassing that which was awakened by the idle jingle of a Provençal Troubadour, or the gorgeous dreams begotten by Arabian fiction. Neither the transition state of society, however, nor the scanty diffusion of knowledge among the Irish, allowed the Senachie to produce any permanent impression upon the people; and the consequence was, that as the changes of society hurried on, he and his audience were carried along with them; his traditionary lore was lost in the ignorance which ever arises when a ban has been placed upon education; and from the recital of the high deeds and heroic feats of by-gone days, he sank down into the humble chronicler of hoary legends and dim traditions, for such only has he been within the memory of the oldest man living, and as such only do we intend to present him to our readers.

The most accomplished Senachie of this kind that ever came within our observation, was a man called Tom Gressiey, or Tom the Shoemaker. He was a very stout well-built man, about fifty years of age, with a round head somewhat bald, and an expansive forehead that argued a considerable reach of natural intellect. His knowing organs were large, and projected over a pair of deep-set lively eyes, that scintillated with

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strong twinklings of humour. His voice was loud, his enunciation rapid, but distinct; and such was the force and buoyancy of his spirits, added to the vehemence of his manner, that altogether it was impossible to resist him. His laughter was infectious, and so loud that it might be heard of a calm summer evening at an incredible distance. Indeed, Tom possessed many qualities that rendered him a most agreeable companion: he could sing a good song for instance, dance a hornpipe as well as any dancing-master, and we need not say that he could tell a good story. He could also imitate a Jew's harp or trump upon his lips, with his mere fingers, in such a manner that the deception was complete; and it was well known that flocks of the country people used to crowd about him for the purpose of hearing his performance upon the ivy leaf, which he played upon by putting it in his mouth, and uttering a most melodious whistle. Altogether, he was a man of great natural powers, and possessed such a memory as the writer of this never knew any other human being to be gifted with. He not only remembered every thing he saw or was concerned in, but every thing he heard also. His language, when he spoke Irish, was fluent, clear, and sometimes eloquent; but when he had recourse to the English, although his fluency remained, yet it was the fluency of a man who made an indiscriminate use of a vocabulary which he did not understand. His pedantry on this account was highly ludicrous and amusing, and his wit and humour surprisingly original and pointed. He had never received any education, and was consequently completely illiterate, yet he could repeat every word of Gallagher's Irish Sermons, Donlevy's Catechism, Think Well On't, the Seven Champions of Christendom, and the substance of Pastorini's and Kolumb Kill's Prophecies, all by heart. Many a time have we seen him read, as he used to call it, one of Dr. Gallagher's Sermons out of the skirt of his big-coat; a feat which was looked upon with twice the wonder it would have

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produced had he merely said that he repeated it. But to read it out of the skirt of his coat! Heavens, how we used to look on with awe and veneration, as Tom, in a loud rapid voice, "rhymed it out of him," for such was the term we gave to his recital of it! His learning, however, was not confined to mere English and Irish, for Tom was also classical in his way, and for want of a better substitute it was said could serve mass, which must always be done in Latin. Certain it was that he could repeat the *De profundis*, and the *Dies Iræ*, in that language. We need scarcely add, that in these learned exhibitions he dealt largely in false quantities, and took a course for himself altogether independent of syntax and prosody; this, however, was no argument against his natural talents, or the surprising force of his memory.

Tom was also an easy and happy *Improviser* both in prose and poetry; his invention was indeed remarkably fertile, but his genius knew no medium between encomium and satire. He either lashed his friends, for the deuce an enemy he had, with rude and fearful attacks of the latter, or gave them, as Pope did to Berkeley, every virtue under heaven, and indeed a good many more than ever were heard of beyond his own system of philosophy and morals.

Tom was a great person for attending wakes and funerals, where he was always a busy man, comforting the afflicted relatives with many learned quotations, repeating *ranns*, or spiritual songs, together with the *De profundis* or *Dies Iræ*, over the corpse, directing even the domestic concerns, paying attention to strangers, looking after the pipes and tobacco, and in fact making himself not only generally useful, but essentially necessary to them, by his happiness of manner, the cordiality of his sympathy, and his unextinguishable humour.

At one time you might see him engaged in leading a Rosary for the repose of the soul of the departed, or singing the Hermit of Killarney, a religious song, to edify the company; and this

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who had the whole Bible by heart, at arguing Scripture? Harmless ambition! humble as it was, and limited in compass, to thee it was all in all; and yet thou wert happy in feeling that it was gratified. This little boon was all thou didst ask of life, and it was kindly granted thee. The last night we ever had the pleasure of being amused by Tom, was at a wake in the neighbourhood; for it somehow happened that there was seldom either a wake or a dance within two or three miles of us that we did not attend; and, God forgive us! when old Poll Doolin was on her death-bed, the only care that troubled us was an apprehension that she might recover, and thus defraud us of a right merry wake! Upon the occasion we allude to, it being known that Tom Gressiey would be present, of course the house was crowded. And when he did come, and his loud good-humoured voice was heard at the door, heavens! how every young heart bounded with glee and delight!

The first thing he did on entering was to go where the corpse was laid out, and in a loud rapid voice repeat the *De profundis* for the repose of her soul, after which he sat down and smoked a pipe. Oh, well do we remember how the whole house was hushed, for all was expectation and interest as to what he would do or say. At length he spoke—"Is Frank Magavren there?"

"All that's left o' me's here, Tom."

"An' if the sweep-chimly-general had his due, Frank, that wouldn't be much; and so the longer you can keep him out of that same, the betther for yourself."

"Folly on, Tom! you know there's none of us all able to spake up to *you*, say what you will."

"It's not so when you're beside a purty girl, Frank. But sure that's not surprisin'; you were born wid butther in your mouth, an' that's what makes your orations to the fair sect be so soft an' meltin', ha, ha, ha! Well, Frank, never mind; there's worse where you'll go to: keep your own counsel fast:

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let's salt your gums, an' you'll do yet. Whisht, boys; I'm goin' to sing a *rann*, an' afther that Frank an' I will pick a couple o' dozen out o' yez 'to box the Connaughtman.'" Boxing the Connaughtman is a play or diversion peculiar to wakes; it is grotesquely athletic in its character, but full, besides, of comic sentiment and farcical humour.

He then commenced an Irish rann or song, the substance of which was as follows, according to his own translation:—

"St. Patrick, it seems, was one Sunday morning crossing a mountain on his way to a chapel to say mass, and as he was an humble man (coaches weren't then invented, at any rate) an' a great pedestrium (pedestrian), he took the shortest cut across the mountain. In one of the lonely glens he met a herd-caudy, who spent his time in eulogizin' his masther's cattle, according to the precepts of them times, which was not by any means so larned an' primogenitive as now. The countenance of the day was clear an' extremely sabbathical; every thing was at rest, barring the little river before him, an' indeed one would think that it flowed on with more decency an' betther behaviour than upon other sympathizing occasions. The birds, to be sure, were singin', but it was aisy to see that they chirped out their best notes in honour of the day. 'Good morrow on you,' said St. Patrick; 'what's the raison you're not goin' to prayers, my fine little fellow?'

"'What's prayers?' axed the boy. St. Patrick looked at him with a very pitiful and calamitous expression in his face. 'Can you bless yourself?' said he. 'No,' said the boy, 'I don't know what it means?' 'Worse and worse,' thought St. Patrick.

"'Poor bouchal, it isn't your fault. An' how do you pass your time here?'

"'Why, my mate (food) 's brought to me, an' I do be makin' kings' crowns out of my rushes, whin I'm not watching the cows and sheep.'

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"St. Patrick sleeked down his head wid great dereliction, an' said, 'Well, acushla, you do be operatin' king's crowns, but I tell you you're born to wear a greater one than a king's, an' that is a crown of glory. Come along wid me.'

"'I can't lave my cattle,' said the other, for fraid they might go astray.'

"'Right enough, replied St. Patrick, 'but I'll let you see that they won't.' Now, any how St. Patrick undherstood cattle irresistibly himself, havin' been a herd-caudy (boy) in his youth; so he clapped his thumb to his thrapple, an' gave the Loy-a-loa to the sheep, an' behould you they came about him wid great relaxation an' respect. 'Keep yourselves sober an' fictitious,' says he, addressin' them, 'till this boy comes back, an' don't go beyant your owner's property; or if you do, it 'll be worse for yez. If you regard your health durin' the approximatin' season, mind an' attend to my words. The rot this year's likely to be rife I can tell yez.'

"Now, you see, every sheep, while he was spakin', lifted the right fore-leg, an' raised the head a little, an' behould when he finished, they kissed their foot, an' made him a low bow as a mark of their estimation an' superfluity. He thin clapped his finger an' thumb in his mouth, gave a loud whistle, an' in a periodical time he had all the other cattle on the hill about him, to which he addressed the same ondeniable oration, an' they bowed to him wid the same polite gentility. He then brought the lad along wid him, an' as they made progress in the journey, the little fellow says,

"'You seem frustrated by the walk, an' if you let me carry your bundle, I'll feel obliged to you.'

"'Do so,' said the saint; 'an' as it's rather long, throw the bag that the things are in over your shoulder; you'll find it the aisiest way to carry it.'

"Well, the boy adopted this insinivation, an' they went ambiguously along till they reached the chapel.

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"'Do you see that house?' said St. Patrick.

"'I do,' said the other; 'it has no chimney on it.

"'No,' said the saint; 'it has not; but in that house, Christ, he that saved you, will be present to-day.' An' the boy thin shed tears, when he thought of the goodness of Christ in saving one that was a stranger to him. So they entered the chapel, an' the first thing the lad was struck with was the beams of the sun that came in through the windy, shinin' beside the altar. Now, he had never seen the like of it in a house before, an' thinkin' it was put there for some use or other in the intarior, he threw the wallet, which was like a saddle-bag, across the sunbeams, an' lo an' behould you, the sunbeams supported it, an' at the same time, a loud sweet voice was heard, sayin' 'This is my servant St. Kieran, an' he's welcome to the house o' God!' St. Patrick then tuck him an' instructed him in the various edifications of the larned languages until he became one of the greatest saints that ever Ireland saw, with the exception an' liquidation of St. Patrick himself."

Such is a faint outline of the style and manner peculiar to the narratives of Tom Gressiey. Indeed, it has frequently surprised not only us, but all who knew him, to think how and where and when he got together such an incredible number of hard and difficult words. Be this as it may, one thing was perfectly clear, that they cost him little trouble and no study in their application. His pride was to speak as learnedly as possible, and of course he imagined that the most successful method of doing this was to use as many sesquipidalian expressions as he could crowd into his language, without any regard whatsoever as to their propriety.

Immediately after the relation of this legend, he passed at once into a different spirit. He and Frank Magavren marshalled their forces, and in a few minutes two or three dozen young fellows were hotly engaged in the humorous game of "Boxing the Connaughtman." Boxing the Connaughtman

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was followed by "the Standing Brogue" and "the Sitting Brogue," two other sports practised only at wakes. And here we may observe generally, that the amusement resorted to on such occasions are never to be found elsewhere, but are exclusively peculiar to the house of mourning, where they are benevolently introduced for the purpose of alleviating sorrow. Having gone through a few more such sports, Tom took a seat and addressed a neighbouring farmer, named Gordon, as follows:—"Jack Gordon, do you know the history of your own name and its original fluency?"

"Indeed no, Tom, I cannot say I do."

"Well, boys, if you derogate your noise a little, I'll tell you the origin of the name of Gordon; * it's a story about ould Oliver Crummle, whose tongue is on the look-out for a drop of wather ever since he went to the lower story."

* See the following Legend.

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THE CASTLE OF AUGHENTAIN;

OR,

A LEGEND OF THE BROWN GOAT.

Narrated by Tom Gressiey, the Irish Senachie.

THE hum of general conversation now gradually subsided into silence, and every face assumed an expression of curiosity and interest, with the exception of Jemsy Baccagh, who was rather deaf, and blind George M'Girr, so called because he wanted an eye; both of whom, in high and piercing tones, carried on an angry discussion touching a small law-suit that had gone against Jemsy in the Court Leet, of which George was a kind of rustic attorney. An outburst of impatient rebuke was immediately poured upon them from fifty voices. "Whisht wid yez, ye pair of devils' limbs, an' Tom goin' to tell us a story. Jemsy, your sowl's as as crooked as your lame leg, you sinner; an' as for blind George, if roguery would save a man, he'd escape the devil yet. Tarenation to yez, an' be quiet till we hear the story!"

"Ay," said Tom, "Scripthur says that when the blind leads the blind, both will fall into the ditch; but God help the lame that have blind George to lead them; we may aisily guess where he'd guide them to, especially such a poor innocent as Jemsy there." This banter as it was not intended to give offence, so was it received by the parties to whom it was addressed with laughter and good humour.

"Silence, boys," said Tom; "I'll jist take a draw of the pipe till I put my mind in a proper state of transmigration for what I'm goin' to narrate."

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He then smoked on for a few minutes, his eyes complacently but meditatively closed, and his whole face composed into the philosophic spirit of a man who knew and felt his own superiority, as well as what was expected from him. When he had sufficiently arranged the materials in his mind, he took the pipe out of his mouth, rubbed the shank-end of it against the cuff of his coat, then handed it to his next neighbour, and having given a short preparatory cough, thus commenced his legend:—

"You must know that afther Charles the First happened to miss his head one day, havin' lost it while playin' a game of 'Heads an' Points' with the Scotch, that a man called Nolly Rednose, or Oliver Crummle, was sent over to Ireland with a parcel of breekless Highlanders an' English Bodaghs to subduvate the Irish, an' as many of the Prodestans as had been friends to the late king, who were called Royalists. Now, it appears by many larned transfigurations that Nolly Rednose had in his army a man named Balgruntie, or the Hog of Cupar; a fellow who was as coorse as sackin', as cunnin' as a fox, an' as gross as the swine he was named afther. Rednose, there is no doubt of it, was as nate a hand at takin' a town or castle as ever went about it; but then, any town that didn't surrendher at discretion was sure to experience little mitigation at his hands; an' whenever he was bent on wickedness, he was sure to say his prayers at the commencement of every siege or battle—that is, that he intended to show no marcy in—for he'd get a book, an' openin' it at the head of his army, he'd cry, 'Ahem, my brethren, let us praise God by endeavourin' till sing sich or sich a psalm;' an' God help the man, woman, or child, that came before him after that. Well an' good: it so happened that a squadron of his psalm-singers were dispatched by him from Enniskillen, where he stopped to rendher assistance to a party of his army that O'Neill was leatherin' down near Dungannon, an' on their way they happened to take up their quarthers for the night at the Mill of Aughentain. Now,

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above all men in the creation, who should be appointed to lead this same squadron but the Hog of Cupar. 'Balgruntie, go off wid you,' said Crummle, when administering his instructions to him; 'but be sure that wherever you meet a fat royalist on the way, to pay your respects to him as a Christian ought,' says he; 'an', above all things, my dear brother Balgruntie, *don't neglect your devotions*, otherwise our arms can't prosper; and be sure,' says he, with a pious smile, 'that if they promulgate opposition, you will make them bleed anyhow, either in purse or person; or if they provoke the grace o' God, take a little from them in both; an' so the Lord's name be praised, yeamen!"

"Balgruntie sang a psalm of thanksgivin' for bein' elected by his commander to sich a holy office, set out on his march, an' the next night he an' his choir slept in the mill of Aughentain, as I said. Now, Balgruntie had in this same congregation of his, a long-legged Scotchman named Sandy Saveall, which name he got by way of etymology, for his charity; for it appears by the historical elucidations that Sandy was perpetually rantinizin' about sistherly affection an' brotherly love: an' what showed more taciturnity than any thing else was, that while this same Sandy had the persuasion to make every one believe that he thought of nothing else, he shot more people than any ten men in the squadron. He was indeed what they call a dead shot, for no one ever knew him to miss any thing he fired at. He had a musket that would throw point blank an English mile, an' if he only saw a man's nose at that distance, he used to say that with aid from above he could blow it for him with a leaden handkerchy, meaning that he could blow it off his face with a musket bullet; and so by all associations he could, for indeed the faits he performed were very insinivating an' problematical.

"Now, it so happened, that at this period there lived in the castle a fine wealthy ould royalist, named Graham or Grimes,

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as they are often denominated, who had but one child, a daughter, whose beauty an' perfections were mellifluous far an' near over the country, an' who had her health drunk, as the toast of Ireland, by the Lord Lieutenant in the Castle of Dublin, undher the sympathetic appellation of 'the Rose of Aughentain.' It was her son that afterwards ran through the estate, and was forced to part wid the castle; an' it's to him the proverb colludes, which mentions 'ould John Grame, that *swallied* the castle of Aughentain.'

"Howsomever, that bears no prodigality to the story I'm narratin'. So what could you have of it, but Balgruntie, who had heard of the father's wealth and the daughter's beauty, took a holy hankerin' afther both; an' havin' as usual said his prayers an' sung a psalm, he determined for to clap his thumb upon the father's money, thinkin' that the daughter would be the more aisily superinduced to folly it. In other words, he made up his mind to sack the castle, carry off the daughter and marry her righteously, rather, he said, through a sincere wish to bring her into a state of grace, by a union with a God-fearin' man, whose walk he trusted was Zion-ward, than from any cardinal detachment for her wealth or beauty. He accordingly sent up a file of the most pious men he had, picked fellows, with good psalm-singin' voices and strong noses, to request that John Graham would give them possession of the castle for a time, an' afterwards join them at prayers, as a proof that he was no royalist, but a friend to Crummle an' the Commonwealth. Now, you see, the best of it was, that the very man they demanded this from was commonly denominated by the people as 'Gunpowder Jack,' in consequence of the great signification of his courage; an', besides, he was known to be a member of the Hell-fire Club, that no person could join that hadn't fought three duels, and killed at least one man; and in ordher to show that they regarded neither God nor hell, they were obligated to dip one hand in blood an'

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the other in fire, before they could be made members of the club. It's aisy to see, then, that Graham was not likely to quail before a handful of the very men he hated wid all the vociferation in his power, an' he accordingly put his head out of the windy, an' axed them their tergiversation for bein' there.

"'Begone about your business,' he said; 'I owe you no regard. What brings you before the castle of a man who despises you? Don't think to determinate me, you canting rascals, for you can't. My castle's well provided wid men an' ammunition, an' food; an' if you don't be off, I'll make you sing a different tune from a psalm one.' Begad he did, plump to them, out of the windy.

"When Crummle's men returned to Balgruntie in the mill, they related what had tuck place, and he said that afther prayers he'd send a second message in writin', an' if it wasn't attended to, they'd put their trust in God an' storm the castle. The squadron he commanded was not a numerous one; an' as they had no artillery, an' were surrounded by enemies, the takin' of the castle, which was a strong one, might cost them some snufflication. At all events, Balgruntie was bent on makin' the attempt, especially afther he heard that the castle was well vittled, an' indeed he was meritoriously joined by his men, who piously licked their lips on hearin' of such glad tidings. Graham was a hot-headed man, without much ambidexterity or deliberation, otherwise he might have known that the bare mintion of the beef and mutton in his castle was only fit to make such a hungry pack desperate. But be that as it may, in a short time Balgruntie wrote him a letter, demandin' of him, in the name of Nolly Rednose an' the Commonwealth, to surrendher the castle, or if not, that, ould as he was, he would make him as soople as a two-year-ould. Graham, afther readin' it, threw the letther back to the messengers, wid a certain recommendation to Balgruntie regardin' it; but whether the

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same recommendation was followed up an' acted on so soon as he wished, historical retaliations do not inform.

"On their return, the military narrated to their commander the reception they resaved a second time from Graham, an' he then resolved to lay regular siege to the castle; but as he knew he could not readily take it by violence, he determined, as they say, to starve the garrison leisurely an' by degrees. But, first an' foremost, a thought struck him, an' he immediently called Sandy Saveall behind the mill-hopper, which he had now turned into a pulpit for the purpose of expoundin' the word, an' givin' exhortations to his men.

"'Sandy,' said he, 'are you in a state of justification to-day?'

"'Towards noon,' replied Sandy, 'I had some strong wrestlings with the enemy; but I am able, undher praise, to say that I defated him in three attacks, and I consequently feel my righteousness much recruited. I had some wholesome communings with the miller's daughter, a comely lass, who may yet be recovered from the world, an' led out of the darkness of Aigyp, by a word in saison.'

"'Well, Sandy,' replied the other, 'I lave her to your own instructions; there is another poor benighted maiden, who is also comely, up in the castle of that godless sinner, who belongeth to the Perdition Club; an' indeed, Sandy, until he is somehow removed, I think there is little hope of plucking her like a brand out of the burning.'

"He serenaded Sandy in the face as he spoke, an' then cast an extemporary glance at the musket, which was as much as to say, 'can you translate an insinivation?' Sandy concocted a smilin' reply; an' takin' up the gun, rubbed the barrel, an' patted it as a sportsman would pat the neck of his horse or dog, wid reverence for comparin' the villain to either one or the other.

"'If it was known, Sandy,' said Balgruntie, 'it would harden her heart against me; an' as he is hopeless at all events, bein' a member of that Perdition Club'——

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"'True,' said Sandy, 'but you lave the miller's daughter to me?'

"'I said so.'

"'Well, if his removal will give you any consolidation in the matther, you may say no more.'

"'I could not, Sandy, justify it to myself to take him away by open violence, for you know that I bear a conscience if any thing too tendher and dissolute. Also I wish, Sandy, to presarve an ondeniable reputation for humanity; an', besides, the daughter might become as reprobate as the father if she suspected me to be personally concarned in it. I have heard a good deal about him, an' am sensibly informed that he has been shot at twice before, by the sons, it is thought, of an enemy that he himself killed rather significantly in a duel.'

"'Very well,' replied Sandy; 'I would myself feel scruples; but as both our consciences is touched in the business, I think I am justified. Indeed, captain, it is very likely afther all that we are but the mere instruments in it, an' that it is through us that this ould unrighteous sinner is to be removed by a more transplendant judgment.'

"Begad, neighbours, when a rascal is bent on wickedness, it is aisy to find cogitations enough to back him in his villany. And so was it with Sandy Saveall and Balgruntie.

"That evenin' ould Graham was shot through the head standin' in the windy of his own castle, an' to extenuate the suspicion of sich an act from Crummle's men, Balgruntie himself went up the next day, beggin' very politely to have a friendly explanation with Squire Graham, sayin' that he had harsh ordhers, but that if the castle was peaceably delivered to him, he would, for the sake of the young lady, see that no injury should be offered either to her or her father.

"The young lady, however, had the high drop in her, and becoorse the only answer he got was a flag of defiance. This nettled the villain, an' he found there was nothin' else for it

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but to plant a strong guard about the castle to keep all that was in, in—and all that was out, out.

"In the meantime, the very appearance of the Crumwellians in the neighbourhood struck such terror into the people, that the country, which was then only very thinly inhabited, became quite desarted, an' for miles about the face of a human bein' could not be seen, barrin' their own, sich as they were. Crummle's track was always a bloody one, an' the people knew that they were wise in puttin' the hills and mountain passes between him an' them. The miller an' his daughter bein' encouraged by Sandy, staid principally for the sake of Miss Graham; but except them, there was not a man or woman in the barony to bid good morrow to, or say Salvey Dominey. On the beginnin' of the third day, Balgruntie, who knew his officialities extremely well, an' had sent down a messenger to Dungannon to see whether matters were so bad as they had been reported, was delighted to hear that O'Neill had disappeared from the neighbourhood. He immediately informed Crummle of this, and tould him that he had laid siege to one of the leadin' passes of the north, an' that, by gettin' possession of the two castles of Aughentain and Augher, he could keep O'Neill in check, an' command that part of the country. Nolly approved of this, an' ordhered him to proceed, but was sorry that he could send him no assistance at present; 'however,' said he, 'with a good cause, sharp swords, an' aid from above, there is no fear of us.'

"They now set themselves to take the castle in airnest. Balgruntie an' Sandy undherstood one another, an' not a day passed that some one wasn't dropped in it. As soon as ever a face appeared, pop went the deadly musket, an' down fell the corpse of whoever it was aimed at. Miss Graham herself was spared for good reasons, but in the coorse of ten or twelve days she was nearly alone. Ould Graham, though a man that feared nothing, was only guilty of a profound swagger when

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he reported the strength of the castle and the state of the provisions to Balgruntie an' his crew. But above all things, that which eclipsed their distresses was the want of wather. There was none in the castle, an' although there is a beautiful well beside it, yet, *fareer gair*, it was of small responsibility to them. Here, then, was the poor young lady placed at the marcy of her father's murdherer; for however she might have doubted in the beginnin' that he was shot by the Crumwellians, yet the death of nearly all the servants of the house in the same way was a sufficient proof that it was like masther like man in this case. What, however, was to be done? The whole garrison now consisted only of Miss Graham herself, a fat man-cook advanced in years, who danced in his distress in ordher that he might suck his own perspiration, and a little orphan boy that she tuck undher her purtection. It was a hard case, and yet, God bless her, she held out like a man.

"It's an ould sayin' that there's no tyin' up the tongue of Fame, an' it's also a true one. The account of the siege had gone far an' near in the counthry, an' none of the Irish, no matter what they were who ever heard it, but wor sorry. Sandy Saveall was now the devil an' all. As there was no more in the castle to shoot, he should find something to regenerate his hand upon: for instance, he practised upon three or four of Graham's friends, who undher one pretence or other were seen skulkin' about the castle, an' none of their relations durst come to take away their bodies in ordher to bury them. At length things came to that pass, that poor Miss Graham was at the last gasp for something to drink; she had ferreted out as well as she could a drop of moisture here an' there in the damp corners of the castle, but now all that was gone; the fat cook had sucked himself to death, and the little orphan boy died calmly away a few hours afther him, lavin' the helpless lady with a tongue swelled an' furred, and a mouth parched an' burned, for want of drink. Still the blood of the Grahams

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was in her, and yield she would not to the villain that left her as she was. Sich then was the transparency of her situation, when, happening to be on the battlements to catch, if possible, a little of the dew of heaven, she was surprised to see somethin' flung up, which rolled down towards her feet: she lifted it, an' on examinin' the contents, found it to be a stone covered with a piece of brown paper, inside which was a slip of white, containing the words, 'Endure—relief is near you!' But, poor young lady, of what retrospection could these tidings be to one in her situation?—she could scarcely see to read them; her brain was dizzy, her mouth like a cindher, her tongue swelled an' black, an' her breath felt as hot as a furnace. She could barely breathe, an' was in the very act of lyin' down undher the triumphant air of heaven to die, when she heard the shrill voice of a young kid in the castle yard, and immediently remembered that a brown goat which her lover, a gentleman named Simpson, had, when it was a kid, made her a present of, remained in the castle about the stable during the whole siege. She instantly made her way slowly down stairs, got a bowl, and havin' milked the goat, she took a little of the milk, which I need not asseverate at once relieved her. By this means she recovered, an' findin' no further anticipation from druth, she resolved like a hairo to keep the Crumwellians out, an' to wait till either God or man might lend her a helpin' hand.

"Now, you must know that the miller's purty daughter had also a sweetheart, called *Suil Gair* Maguire, or sharp-eyed Maguire, an humble branch of the great Maguires of Enniskillen; and this same Suil Gair was servant an' foster-brother to Simpson, who was the intended husband of Miss Graham. Simpson, who lived some miles off, on hearin' the condition of the castle, gathered together all the royalists far an' near; an' as Crummle was honestly hated by both Romans an' Prodestans, faith, you see, Maguire himself promised to send a few of his followers to the rescue. In the meantime Suil Gair dressed

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himself up like a fool or idiot, an' undher the purtection of the miller's daughter, who blarnied Saveall in great style, was allowed to wandher about an' joke wid the sogers; but especially he took a fancy to Sandy, and challenged him to put one stone out of five in one of the port-holes of the castle, at a match of finger-stone. Sandy, who was nearly as famous at that as the musket, was rather relaxed when he saw that Suil Gair could at least put in every fifth stone, an' that he himself could hardly put one in out of twenty. Well, at all events, it was durin' their sport that fool Paddy, as they called him, contrived to fling the scrap of writin' I spoke of across the battlements at all chances; for when he undhertook to go to the castle, he gave up his life as lost; but he didn't care about that, in case he was able to save either his foster-brother or Miss Graham. But this is not at all indispensable, for it is well known that many a foster-brother sacrificed his life the same way, and in cases of great danger, when the real brother would beg to decline the compliment.

"Things were now in a very connubial state entirely. Balgruntie heard that relief was comin' to the castle, an' what to do he did not know; there was little time to be lost, however, an' something must be done. He praiched flowery discourses twice a-day from the mill-hopper, an' sang psalms for grace to be directed in his righteous intentions; but as yet he derived no particular predilection from either. Sandy appeared to have got a more bountiful modelum of grace than his captain, for he succeeded at last in bringin' the miller's daughter to sit undher the word at her father's hopper. Fool Paddy, as they called Maguire, had now become a great favourite wid the sogers, an' as he proved to be quite harmless and inoffensive, they let him run about the place widout opposition. The castle, to be sure, was still guarded, but Miss Graham kept her heart up in consequence of the note, for she hoped every day to get relief from her friends. Balgruntie, now seein' that

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the miller's daughter was becomin' more serious undher the taichin' of Saveall, formed a plan that he thought might enable him to penethrate the castle, an' bear off the lady an' the money. This was to strive wid very delicate meditation to prevail on the miller's daughter, through the renown that he thought Sandy had over her, to open a correspondency wid Miss Graham; for he knew that if one of the gates was unlocked, and the unsuspectin' girl let in, the whole squadron would soon be in afther her. Now, this plan was the more dangerous to Miss Graham, because the miller's daughter had intended to bring about the very same denouncement for a different purpose. Between her friends an' her enemies it was clear the poor lady had little chance; an' it was Balgruntie's intention, the moment he had sequestrated her and the money, to make his escape, an' lave the castle to whosomever might choose to take it. Things, however, were ordhered to take a different bereavement: the Hog of Cupar was to be trapped in the hydrostatics of his own hypocrisy, an' Saveall to be overmatched in his own premises. Well, the plot was mentioned to Sandy, who was promised a good sketch of the prog; an' as it was jist the very thing he dreamt about night an' day, he snapped at it as a hungry dog would at a sheep's trotter. That night the miller's daughter—whose name I may as well say was Nannie Duffy, the purtiest girl an' the sweetest singer that ever was in the counthry—was to go to the castle an' tell Miss Graham that the sogers wor all gone, Crummle killed, an' his whole army massacrayed to atoms. This was a different plan from poor Nannie's, who now saw clearly what they were at. But never heed a woman for bein' witty when hard pushed.

"'I don't like to do it,' said she, 'for it looks like thrachery, espishilly as my father has left the neighbourhood, and I don't know where he is gone to; an' you know thrachery's ondacent in either man or woman. Still, Sandy, it goes hard for me to

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refuse one that I—I——well, I wish I knew where my father is—I would like to know what he'd think of it.'

"'Hut,' said Sandy, 'were's the use of such scruples in a good cause?—when we get the money, we'll fly. It is principally for the sake of waining you an' her from the darkness of idolatry that we do it. Indeed, my conscience would not rest well if I let a soul an' body like yours remain a prey to Sathan, my darlin'.'

"'Well,' said she, 'doesn't the captain exhort this evenin'?'

"'He does, my beloved, an' with a blessin' will expound a few verses from the song of Solomon.'

"'It's betther then,' said she, 'to sit under the word, an' perhaps some light may be given to us.'

"This delighted Saveall's heart, who now looked upon pretty Nannie as his own; indeed, he was obliged to go gradually and cautiously to work, for cruel though Nolly Rednose was, Sandy knew that if any violent act of *that* kind should raich him, the guilty party would sup sorrow. Well, accordin' to this pious arrangement, Balgruntie assembled all his men, who were not on duty, about the hopper, in which he stood as usual, an' had commenced a powerful exhortation, the substratum of which was devoted to Nannie; he dwelt upon the happiness of religious love; said that scruples were often suggested by Satan, an' that a heavenly duty was but terrestrial when put in comparishment wid an earthly one. He also made collusion to the old Squire that was popped by Sandy; said it was often a judgment for the wicked man to die in his sins; an' was gettin' on wid great eloquence an' emulation, when a low rumblin' noise was heard, an' Balgruntie, throwin' up his clenched hands an' grindin' his teeth, shouted out, 'Hell and d—n, I'll be ground to death! The mill's goin' Murdher! murdher! I'm gone!'

"Faith, it was true enough—she had been wickedly set a-goin' by some one; an' before they had time to stop her,

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the Hog of Cupar had the feet and legs twisted off him before their eyes—a fair illustration of his own doctrine, that it is often a judgment for the wicked man to die in his sins. When the mill was stopped, he was pulled out, but didn't live twenty minutes, in consequence of the loss of blood. Time was pressin', so they ran up a shell of a coffin, and tumbled it into a pit that was hastily dug for it on the mill-common.

"This, however, by no manner of manes relieved poor Nannie from her difficulty, for Saveall, finding himself now first in command, determined not to lose a moment in tolerating his plan upon the castle.

"'You see,' said he, 'that a way is opened for us that we didn't expect; an' let us not close our eyes to the light that has been given, lest it might be suddenly taken from us again. In this instance I suspect that fool Paddy has been made the chosen instrument; for it appears upon enquiry, that he too has disappeared. However, heaven's will be done! we will have the more to ourselves, my beloved—ehem! It is now dark,' he proceeded, 'so I shall go an' take my usual smoke at the mill window, an' in about a quarther of an hour I'll be ready.'

"'But I'm all in a tremor after sich a frightful accident,' replied Nannie: 'an' I want to get a few minutes' quiet before we engage upon our undhertakin.'

"This was very natural, and Saveall accordingly took his usual seat at a little windy in the gable of the mill, that faced the miller's house; an' from the way the bench was fixed, he was obliged to sit with his face exactly towards the same direction. There we leave him meditatin' upon his own righteous approximations, till we folly *Suil Gair* Maguire, or fool Paddy, as they called him, who practicated all that was done.

"Maguire and Nannie, findin' that no time was to be lost, gave all over as ruined, unless somethin' could be acted on

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quickly. Suil Gair at once had thought of settin' the mill a-goin' but kept the plan to himself, any farther than tellin' her not to be surprised at any thing she might see. He then told her to steal him a gun, but if possible to let it be Saveall's, as he knew it could be depended on. 'But I hope you won't shed any blood if you can avoid it,' said she; '*that* I don't like.' 'Tut,' replied Suil Gair, makin' evasion to the question, 'it's good to have it about me for my own defence.'

"He could often have shot either Balgruntie or Saveall in daylight, but not without certain death to himself, as he knew that escape was impossible. Besides, time was not before so pressin' upon them, an' every day relief was expected. Now, however, that relief was so near—for Simpson with a party of royalists an' Maguire's men must be within a couple of hours' journey—it would be too intrinsic entirely to see the castle plundhered, and the lady carried off by such a long-legged skybill as Saveall. Nannie consequentially, at great risk, took an opportunity of slippin' his gun to Suil Gair, who was the best shot of the day in that or any other part of the country; and it was in consequence of this that he was called Suil Gair, or Sharp Eye. But, indeed, all the Maguires were famous shots; an' I'm tould there's one of them now in Dublin that could hit a pigeon's egg, or a silver sixpence at the distance of a hundred yards.* Suil Gair did not merely raise the sluice when he set the mill a-goin', but he whipped it out altogether an' threw it into the dam, so that the possibility of saving the Hog of Cupar was irretrievable. He made off, however, an' threw himself among the tall ragweeds that grew upon the common, till it got dark, when Saveall, as was his custom, should take his evenin' smoke at the windy. Here he sat for some period, thinkin' over many ruminations, before he lit his cutty pipe, as he called it.

* The celebrated Brian Maguire, the first shot of his day, was at this time living in Dublin.

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"'Now,' said he to himself, 'what is there to hindher me from takin' away, or rather from makin' sure of the grand lassie, instead of the miller's dochter? If I get intil the castle, it can be soon effected; for if she has ony regard for her reputation, she will be quiet. I'm a braw handsome lad enough, a wee thought high in the cheek-bones, scaly in the skin, an' knock-knee'd a trifle, but stout an' lathy, an' tough as a withy. But, again, what is to be done wi' Nannie? Hut, she's but a miller's dochter, an' may be disposed of if she gets troublesome. I know she's fond of me, but I dinna blame her for that. However, it wadna become me now to entertain scruples, seein' that the way is made so plain for me. But, save us! eh, sirs, that was an awful death, an' very like a judgment on the Hog of Cupar! It is often a judgment for the wicked to die in their sins! Balgruntie wasna that'—— Whatever he intended to say further, cannot be analogized by man, for, just as he had uttered the last word, which he did while holding the candle to his pipe, the bullet of his own gun entered between his eyes, and the next moment he was a corpse.

"Suil Gair desarved the name he got, for truer did never bullet go to the mark from Saveall's own aim than it did from his. There is now little more to be superadded to my story. Before daybreak the next mornin', Simpson came to the relief of his intended wife; Crummle's party were surprised, taken, an' cut to pieces; an' it so happened that from that day to this the face of a soger belongin' to him was never seen near the mill or castle of Aughentain, with one exception only, and that was this: You all know that the mill is often heard to go at night when nobody sets her a-goin', an' that the most sevendable scrames of torture come out of the hopper, an' that when any one has the courage to look in, they're sure to see a man dressed like a soger, with a white mealy face, in the act, so to say, of havin' his legs ground off him. Many a guess was made about who the spirit could be, but all to no purpose. There,

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however, is the truth for yez; the spirit that shrieks in the hopper is Balgruntie's ghost, an' he's to be ground that way till the day of judgment.

"Be coorse, Simpson and Miss Graham were married, as war Nannie Duffy an' Suil Gair; an' if they all lived long an' happy, I wish we may all live ten times longer an' happier; an' so we will, but in a betther world than this, plaise God."

"Well, but, Tom," said Gordon, "how does that account for my name, which you said you'd tell me?"

"Right," said Tom; "begad I was near forgettin' it. Why, you see, sich was their veneration for the goat that was the manes, undher God, of savin' Miss Graham's life, that they changed the name of Simpson to Gordon, which signifies in Irish *gor dhun*, or a brown goat, that all their posterity might know the great obligations they lay undher to that reverend animal."

"An' do you mane to tell me," said Gordon, "that my name was never heard of until Oliver Crummle's time?"

"I do. Never in the wide an' subterraneous earth was sich a name known till afther the prognostication I tould you; an' it never would either, only for the goat, sure. I can prove it by the pathepathetics. Denny Mullin, will you give us another draw o' the pipe?"

Tom's authority in these matters was unquestionable, and, besides, there was no one present learned enough to contradict him, with any chance of success, before such an audience. The argument was consequently, without further discussion, decided in his favour, and Gordon was silenced touching the origin and etymology of his own name.

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BARNEY M'HAIGNEY,

THE IRISH PROPHECY MAN.

THE individual to whom the heading of this article is uniformly applied, stands, among the lower classes of his countrymen, in a different light and position from any of those characters that we have already described to our readers. The intercourse which *they* maintain with the people is one that simply involves the means of procuring subsistence for themselves by the exercise of their professional skill, and their powers of contributing to the lighter enjoyments and more harmless amusements of their fellow-countrymen. All the collateral influences they possess, as arising from the hold which the peculiar nature of this intercourse gives them, generally affect individuals only on those minor points of feeling that act upon the lighter phases of domestic life. They bring little to society beyond the mere accessories that are appended to the general modes of life and manners, and, consequently, receive themselves as strong an impress from those with whom they mingle, as they communicate to them in return.

Now, the Prophecy Man presents a character far different from all this. With the ordinary habits of life he has little sympathy. The amusements of the people are to him little else than vanity, if not something worse. He despises that class of men who live and think only for the present, without ever once performing their duties to posterity, by looking into those great events that lie in the womb of futurity. Domestic joys or distresses do not in the least affect him, because the

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man has not to do with feelings or emotions, but with principles. The speculations in which he indulges, and by which his whole life and conduct are regulated, place him far above the usual impulses of humanity. He cares not much who has been married or who has died, for his mind is, in point of time, communing with unborn generations upon affairs of high and solemn import. The past, indeed, is to him something, the future, every thing; but the present, unless when marked by the prophetic symbols, little or nothing. The topics of his conversation are vast and mighty, being nothing less than the fate of kingdoms, the revolution of empires, the ruin or establishment of creeds, the fall of monarchs, or the rise and prostration of principalities and powers. How can a mind thus engaged descend to those petty subjects of ordinary life, which engage the common attention? How could a man hard at work in evolving out of prophecy the subjugation of some hostile state, care a farthing whether Loghlin Roe's daughter was married to Gusty Given's son, or not? The thing is impossible. Like Fame, the head of the Prophecy Man is always in the clouds, but so much higher up as to be utterly above the reach of any intelligence that does not affect the fate of nations. There is an old anecdote told of a very high and a very low man meeting. "What news down there?" said the tall fellow. "Very little," replied the other: "what kind of weather have you above?" Well, indeed, might the Prophecy Man ask what news there is below, for his mind seldom leaves those aërial heights from which it watches the fate of Europe, and the shadowing forth of future changes.

The Prophecy Man—that is, he who solely devotes himself to an anxious observation of those political occurrences which mark the signs of the times, as they bear upon the future, the principal business of whose life it is to associate them with his own prophetic theories—is now a rare character in Ireland. He was, however, a very marked one. The Senachie and

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other itinerant characters had, when compared with him, a very limited beat, indeed. Instead of being confined to a parish or a barony, the bounds of the Prophecy Man's travels were those of the kingdom itself; and, indeed, some of them have been known to make excursions to the Highlands of Scotland, in order, if possible, to pick up old prophecies, and to make themselves, by cultivating an intimacy with the Scottish seers, capable of getting a clearer insight into futurity, and surer rules for developing the latent secrets of time.

One of the heaviest blows to the speculations of this class was the downfal and death of Buonaparte—especially the latter. There are still living, however, those who can get over this difficulty, and who will not hesitate to assure you, with a look of much mystery, that the real "Bonyparty" is alive and well, and will make his due appearance *when the time comes;* he who surrendered himself to the English being but an accomplice of the true one.

The next fact is the failure of the old prophecy that a George the Fourth would never sit on the throne of England. His coronation and reign, however, puzzled our prophets sadly, and, indeed, sent adrift for ever the pretensions of this prophecy to truth.

But that which has nearly overturned the system, and routed the whole prophetic host, is the failure of the speculations so confidently put forward by Dr. Walmsey in his General History of the Christian Church, vulgarly called Pastorini's Prophecy, he having assumed the name Pastorini as an *incognito* or *nom de guerre.* The theory of Pastorini was, that Protestantism and all descriptions of heresy would disappear about the year eighteen hundred and twenty-five, an inference which he drew with considerable ingenuity and learning from Scriptural prophecy, taken in connexion with past events, and which he argued with all the zeal and enthusiasm of a theorist

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naturally anxious to see the truth of his own prognostications verified. The failure of this, which was their great modern standard, has nearly demolished the political seers as a class, or compelled them to fall back upon the more antiquated revelations ascribed to St. Columkill, St. Bridget, and others.

Having thus, as is our usual custom, given what we conceive to be such preliminary observations as are necessary to make both the subject and the person more easily understood, we shall proceed to give a short sketch of the only Prophecy Man we ever saw who deserved properly to be called so, in the full and unrestricted sense of the term. This individual's name was Barney M'Haigney; but in what part of Ireland he was born I am not able to inform the reader. All I know is, that he was spoken of on every occasion as The Prophecy Man; and that, although he could not himself read, he carried about with him, in a variety of pockets, several old books and manuscripts that treated upon his favourite subject.

Barney was a tall man, by no means meanly dressed; and it is necessary to say that he came not within the character or condition of a mendicant. On the contrary, he was considered as a person who must be received with respect, for the people knew perfectly well that it was not with every farmer in the neighbourhood he would condescend to sojourn. He had nothing of the ascetic and abstracted meagreness of the Prophet in his appearance. So far from that, he was inclined to corpulency; but, like a certain class of fat men, his natural disposition was calm, but, at the same time, not unmixed with something of the pensive. His habits of thinking, as might be expected, were quiet and meditative; his personal motions slow and regular; and his transitions from one resting-place to another never of such length during a single day as to exceed ten miles. At this easy rate, however, he traversed the whole kingdom several times; nor was there probably a

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local prophecy of any importance in the country with which he was not acquainted. He took much delight in the greater and lesser prophets of the Old Testament; but his heart and soul lay, as he expressed it, "in the Revelations of St. John the Divine."

His usual practice was, when the family came home at night from their labour, to stretch himself upon two chairs, his head resting upon the hob, with a boss for a pillow, his eyes closed, as a proof that his mind was deeply engaged with the matter in hand. In this attitude he got some one to read the particular prophecy upon which he wished to descant; and a most curious and amusing entertainment it generally was to hear the text, and his own singular and original commentaries upon it. That he must have been often hoaxed by wags and wits, was quite evident from the startling travesties of the text which had been put into his mouth, and which, having been once put there, his tenacious memory never forgot.

The fact of Barney's arrival in the neighbourhood soon went abroad, and the natural consequence was, that the house in which he thought proper to reside for the time became crowded every night as soon as the hours of labour had passed, and the people got leisure to hear him. Having thus procured him an audience, it is full time that we should allow the fat old Prophet to speak for himself, and give us all an insight into futurity.

"Barney, ahagur," the good man his host would say, "here's a lot o' the neighbours come to hear a whirrangue from you on the Prophecies; and, sure, if you can't give it to them, who is there to be found that can?"

"Throth, Paddy Traynor, although I say it that should not say it, there's truth in that, at all evints. The same knowledge has cost me many a weary blisthur an' sore heel in huntin' it up an' down, through mountain an' glen, in Ulsther,

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Munsther, Leinsther, an' Connaught—not forgettin' the Highlands of Scotland, where there's what they call the 'short prophecy,' or second sight, but wherein there's afther all but little of the Irish or long prophecy, that regards what's to befall the winged woman that flewn into the wilderness. No, no; their second sight isn't thrue prophecy at all. If a man goes out to fish, or steal a cow, an' that he happens to be drowned or shot, another man that has the second sight will see this in his mind about or afther the time it happens. Why, that's little. Many a time our own Irish drames are aiqual to it; an', indeed, I have it from a knowledgeable man, that the gift they boast of has four parents—an empty stomach, thin air, a weak head, an' strong whisky—an' that a man must have all these, espishilly the last, before he can have the second sight properly; an' it's my own opinion. Now, I have a little book (indeed, I left my books with a friend down at Errigle) that contains a prophecy of the milk-white hind an' the bloody panther, an' a forebodin' of the slaughter there's to be in the Valley of the Black Pig, as foretould by Beal Derg, or the prophet wid the red mouth, who never was known to speak but when he prophesied, or to prophesy but when he spoke."

"The Lord bless an' keep us!—an' why was he called the Man wid the Red Mouth, Barney?"

"I'll tell you that. First, bekase he always prophesied about the slaughter an' fightin' that was to take place in the time to come; an', secondly, bekase, while he spoke, the red blood always trickled out of his mouth, as a proof that what he foretould was true."

"Glory be to God! but that's wondherful all out. Well, well!"

"Ay, an' Beal Derg, or the Red Mouth, is still livin'."

"Livin'! why, is he a man of our own time?"

"Our own time! The Lord help you! It's more than a

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thousand years since he made the prophecy. The case you see is this: he an' the ten thousand witnesses are lyin' in an enchanted sleep in one of the Montherlony mountains."

"An' how is that known, Barney?"

"It's known. Every night at a certain hour one of the witnesses—an' they're all sogers, by the way—must come out to look for the sign that's to come."

"An' what is that, Barney?"

"It's the fiery cross; an' when he sees one on aich of the four mountains of the north, he's to know that the same sign's abroad in all the other parts of the kingdom. Beal Derg an' his men are then to waken up, an' by their aid the Valley of the Black Pig is to be set free for ever."

"An' what is the Black Pig, Barney?"

"The Prosbytarian Church, that stretches from Enniskillen to Darry, an' back again from Darry to Enniskillen."

"Well, well, Barney; but prophecy is a strange thing, to be sure! Only think of men livin' a thousand years!"

"Every night one of Beal Derg's men must go to the mouth of the cave, which opens of itself, an' then look out for the sign that's expected. He walks up to the top of the mountain, an' turns to the four corners of the heavens, to thry if he can see it; an' when he finds that he cannot, he goes back to Beal Derg, who, afther the other touches him, starts up, an' axes him, 'Is the time come?' He replies, 'No; the *man is*, but the *hour* is *not!*' an' that instant they're both asleep again. Now, you see, while the soger is on the mountain top, the mouth of the cave is open, an' any one may go in that might happen to see it. One man, it appears, did, an' wishin' to know from curiosity whether the sogers were dead or livin', he touched one of them wid his hand, who started up, an' axed him the same question, 'Is the time come?' Very fortunately he said '*No;*' an' that minute the soger was as sound in his trance as before."

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"An', Barney, what did the soger mane when he said, 'The man is, but the hour is not?'"

"What did he mane? I'll tell you that. The man is Bonyparty, which manes, when put into proper explanation, the *right side;* that is, the true cause. Larned men have found *that* out."

"Barney, wasn't Columkill a great prophet?"

"He was a great man entirely at prophecy, and so was St. Bridget. He prophesied 'that the cock wid the purple comb is to have both his wings clipped by one of his own breed before the struggle comes.' Before that time, too, we're to have the Black Militia, an' afther that it is time for every man to be prepared."

"An', Barney, who is the cock wid the purple comb?"

"Why, the Orangemen, to be sure. Isn't purple their colour, the dirty thieves?"

"An' the Black Militia, Barney, who are they?"

"I have gone far an' near, through north an' through south, up an' down, by hill an' hollow, till my toes were corned, an' my heels in griskins, but could find no one able to resolve that, or bring it clear out o' the prophecy. They're to be sogers in black, an' all their arms an' 'coutrements is to be the same colour; an' farther than that is not known *as yet.*"

"It's a wondher *you* don't know it, Barney, for there's little about prophecy that you haven't at your finger ends."

"Three birds is to meet (Barney proceeded in a kind of recitative enthusiasm) upon the saes—two ravens an' a dove—the two ravens is to attack the dove until she's at the point of death; but before they take her life, an eagle comes and tears the two ravens to pieces, an' the dove recovers.

"There's to be two cries in the kingdom; one of them is to rache from the Giant's Causeway to the centre house of the town of Sligo; the other is to rache from the Falls of Beleek

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to the Mill of Louth, which is to be turned three times with human blood; but this is not to happen until a man with two thumbs an' six fingers upon his right hand happens to be the miller."

"Who's to give the sign of freedom to Ireland?"

"The little boy wid the red coat that's born a dwarf, lives a giant, and dies a dwarf again! He's lightest of foot, but leaves the heaviest foot-mark behind him. An' it's he that's to give the sign of freedom to Ireland.*

"There's a period to come when Antichrist is to be upon the earth, attended by his two body servants Gog and Magog."

"Who are they, Barney?"

"They are the sons of *Hegog* an' *Shegog*, or in other words, of Death an' Damnation, and cousin-jarmins to the Devil himself, which of coorse is the raison why he promotes them."

"Lord save us! But I hope that won't be in our time, Barney!"

"Antichrist is to come from the land of Crame o' Tarthar (Crim Tartary, according to Pastorini), which will account for himself an' his army breathin' fire an' brimstone out of their mouths, according to the glorious Revelation of St. John the Divine, an' the great prophecy of Pastorini, both of which beautifully compromise upon the subject.

"The prophet of the Black Stone is to come, who always prophesies backwards, and foretells what has happened. He is to be a mighty hunter, an' instead of ridin' to his fetlocks *in* blood, he is to ride *upon* it, to the admiration of his times. It's of him it is said 'that he is to be the only prophet that ever went on horseback!'"

"Then there's Bardolphus, who, as there was a prophet wid the red mouth, is called 'the prophet wid the red nose.' Ireland was, it appears from ancient books, undher wather for

* This means fire.

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many hundred years before her discovery; but bein' allowed to become visible one day in every year, the enchantment was broken by a sword that was thrown upon the earth, an' from that out she remained dry, an' became inhabited. 'Woe, woe, woe,' says Bardolphus, 'the time is to come when we'll have a second deluge, an' Ireland is to be undher wather once more. A well is to open at Cork that will cover the whole island from the Giants' Causeway to Cape Clear. In them days St. Patrick will be despised, an' will stand over the pleasant houses wid his pasthoral crook in his hand, crying out *Cead mille failtha* in vain! Woe, woe, woe,' says Bardolphus, 'for in them days there will be a great confusion of colours among the people; there will be neither red noses nor pale cheeks, an' the divine face of man, alas! will put forth blossoms no more. The heart of the times will become changed; an' when they rise up in the mornin', it will come to pass that there will be no longer light heads or shaking hands among Irishmen! Woe, woe, woe, men, women, and children will then die, an' their only complaint, like all those who perished in the flood of ould, will be wather on the brain—wather on the brain! Woe, woe, woe,' says Bardolphus, 'for the changes that is to come, an' the misfortunes that's to befall the many for the noddification of the few! an' yet such things must be, for I, in virtue of the red spirit that dwells in me, must prophesy them. In those times men will be shod in liquid fire an' not be burned; their breeches shall be made of fire, an' will not burn them; their bread shall be made of fire, an' will not burn them; their meat shall be made of fire, an' will not burn them; an' why?—Oh, woe, woe, wather shall so prevail that the coolness of their bodies will keep them safe; yea, they shall even get fat, fair, an' be full of health an' strength, by wearing garments wrought out of liquid fire, by eating liquid fire, an' all because they do not dhrink liquid fire—an' this calamity shall come to pass,' says Bardolphus, the prophet of the red nose.

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"Two widows shall be grinding at the Mill of Louth (so saith the prophecy); one shall be taken and the other left."

Thus would Barney proceed, repeating such ludicrous and heterogeneous mixtures of old traditionary prophecies and spurious quotations from Scripture as were concocted for him by those who took delight in amusing themselves and others at the expense of his inordinate love for prophecy.

"But, Barney, touchin' the Mill of Louth, of the two widows grindin' there, whether will the one that is taken or the one that is left be the best off?"

"The prophecy doesn't say," replied Barney, "an' that's a matther that larned men are very much divided about. My own opinion is, that the one that is taken will be the best off; for St. Bridget says, 'that betune wars an' pestilences, an' famine, the men are to be so scarce that several of them are to be torn to pieces by the women in their struggles to see who will get them for husbands.' That time, they say, is to come."

"But, Barney, isn't there many ould prophecies about particular families in Ireland?"

"Ay, several: an' I'll tell you one of them, about a family that's not far from us this minute. You all know the hangin' wall of the ould Church of Ballynasaggart, in Errigle Keeran parish?"

"We do, to be sure; an' we know the prophecy too."

"Of coorse you do, bein' in the neighbourhood. Well, what is it in the meantime?"

"Why, that's never to fall till it comes down upon an' takes the life of a M'Mahon."

"Right enough; but do you know the raison of it?"

"We can't say that, Barney; but, however, we're at home when you're here."

"Well, I'll tell you. St. Keeran was, may be next to St. Patrick himself, one of the greatest saints in Ireland, but at any

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rate we may put him next to St. Columkill. Now, you see, when he was building the church of Ballynasaggart, it came to pass that there arose a great famine in the land, an' the saint found it hard to feed the workmen where there was no vittles. What to do, he knew not, an' by coorse he was at a sad amplush, no doubt of it. At length, says he, 'Boys, we're all hard set at present, an' widout food bedad we can't work; but if you observe my directions, we'll conthrive to have a bit o' mate in the mean time, an' among ourselves, it was seldom more wanted, for, to tell you the thruth, I never thought my back an' belly would become so well acquainted. For the last three days they haven't been asunder, an' I find they are perfectly willing to part as soon as possible, an' would be glad of any thing that 'ud put betune them.'

"Now, the fact was, that, for drawin' timber an' stones, an' all the necessary matayrials for the church, they had but one bullock, an' him St. Keeran resolved to kill in the evenin', an' to give them a fog meal of him. He accordingly slaughtered him with his own hands, 'but,' said he to the workmen, 'mind what I say, boys; if any one of you breaks a single bone, even the smallest, or injures the hide in the laste, you'll destroy all; an' my sowl to glory but it'll be worse for you besides.'

"He then took all the flesh off the bones, but not till he had boiled them, of coorse; afther which he sewed them up again in the skin, an' put them in the shed, wid a good wisp o' straw before them; an' glory be to God, what do you think, but the next mornin' the bullock was alive, an' in as good condition as ever he was in during his life! Betther fed workmen you could't see, an', bedad, the saint himself got so fat an' rosy that you'd scarcely know him to be the same man afther it. Now, this went on for some time: whenever they wanted mate, the bullock was killed, an' the bones an' skin kept safe as before. At last it happened that a long-sided fellow among them named M'Mahon, not satisfied wid his allowance of the

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mate, took a fancy to have a lick at the marrow, an' accordingly, in spite of all the saint said, he broke one of the legs an' sucked the marrow out of it. But behold you!—the next day when they went to yoke the bullock, they found that he was useless, for the leg was broken an' he couldn't work. This, to be sure, was a sad misfortune to them all, but it couldn't be helped, an' they had to wait till betther times came; for the truth is, that afther the marrow is broken, no power of man could make the leg as it was before until the cure is brought about by time. However, the saint was very much vexed, an' good right he had. 'Now, M'Mahon,' says he to the guilty man, 'I ordher it, an' prophesy that the church we're building will never fall till it falls upon the head of some one of your name, if it was to stand a thousand years. Mark my words, for they must come to pass.'

"An' sure enough you know as well as I do that it's all down long ago, wid the exception of a piece of the wall, that's not standin' but hangin', widout any visible support in life, an' only propped up by the prophecy. It can't fall till a M'Mahon comes undher it; but although there's plenty of the name in the neighbourhood, ten o' the strongest horses in the kingdom wouldn't drag one of them widin half a mile of it. There, now, is the prophecy that belongs to the hangin' wall of Ballynasaggart church."

"But, Barney, didn't you say somethin' about the winged woman that flewn to the wildherness?"

"I did; that's a deep point, an' it's few that undherstands it. The baste wid seven heads an' ten horns is to come; an' when he was to make his appearance, it was said to be time for them that might be alive then to go to their padareens."

"What does the seven heads and ten horns mane, Barney?"

"Why, you see, as I am informed from good authority, the baste has come, an' it's clear from the *ten* horns that he could be no other than Harry the Eighth, who was married to *five*

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wives, an' by all accounts they strengthened an' ornamented him sore against his will. Now, set in case that each o' them —five times two is ten—hut! the thing's as clear as crystal. But I'll prove it betther. You see the woman wid the two wings is the church, an' she flew into the wildherness at the very time Harry the Eighth wid his ten horns on him was in his greatest power."

"Bedad that's puttin' the explanations to it in great style."

"But the woman wid the wings is only to be in the wildherness for a time, times, an' half a time, that's exactly three hundred an' fifty years, an' afther that there's to be no more Prodestans."

"Faith that's great!"

"Sure Columkill prophesied that until H E M E I A M should come, the church would be in no danger, but that afther that she must be undher a cloud for a time, times, an' half a time, jist in the same way."

"Well, but how do you explain that, Barney?"

"An' St. Bridget prophesied that when D O C is uppermost, the church will be hard set in Ireland. But, indeed, there's no end to the prophecies that there is concerning Ireland an' the church. However, neighbours, do you know that I feel the heat o' the fire has made me rather drowsy, an' if you have no objection, I'll take a bit of a nap. There's great things near us, any how. An' talkin' about D O C brings to my mind another ould prophecy, made up, they say, betune Columkill and St. Bridget; an' it is this, that the triumph of the counthry will never be at hand till the D O C flourishes in Ireland."

Such were the speculations upon which the harmless mind of Barney M'Haigney ever dwelt. From house to house, from parish to parish, and from province to province, did he thus trudge, never in a hurry, but always steady and constant in his motions. He might be not inaptly termed the Old

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Mortality of traditionary prophecy, which he often chiselled a-new, added to, and improved, in a manner that generally gratified himself and his hearers. He was a harmless, kind man, and never known to stand in need of either clothes or money. He paid little attention to the silent business of on-going life, and was consequently very nearly an abstraction. He was always on the alert, however, for the result of a battle; and after having heard it, he would give no opinion whatsoever until he had first silently compared it with his own private theory in prophecy. If it agreed with this, he immediately published it in connexion with his established text; but if it did not, he never opened his lips on the subject.

His class has nearly disappeared, and indeed it is so much the better, for the minds of the people were thus filled with antiquated nonsense that did them no good. Poor Barney, to his great mortification, lived to see with his own eyes the failure of his most favourite prophecies, but he was not to be disheartened even by this; though some might fail, all could not; and his stock was too varied and extensive not to furnish him with a sufficient number of others over which to cherish his imagination, and expatiate during the remainder of his inoffensive life.

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MOLL ROE'S MARRIAGE;

OR,

THE PUDDING BEWITCHED.

It is utterly impossible for any one but an Irishman fully to comprehend the extravagance to which the spirit of Irish humour is often carried, and that even in circumstances which one would suppose it ought least to be expected. In other countries the house of death is in reality the house of mourning, and so indeed it is also in Ireland, where domestic grief is felt with a power that reaches to the uttermost depths of the heart. But then in Ireland this very fullness of sorrow, unlike that which is manifested elsewhere, is accompanied by so many incongruous associations, apparently incompatible with, or rather altogether opposed to, the idea of affliction, that strangers, when assured of such an anomalous admixture of feelings, can scarcely bring themselves to believe in their existence. I have said that in Ireland the house of death is without doubt the house of mourning; but I must not conceal the additional fact, that it is also, *in consequence of the calamity which has occurred*, the house of fun; and of fun, too, so broad, grotesque, and extravagant, that in no other condition of society, even in Ireland, is there anything to be found like it. This no doubt, may appear a rather startling assertion, but it is quite true.

And now many of my sagacious readers will at once set about accounting for such a singular combination of mad mirth and profound sorrow. Let them, however, spare their meta-

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physics, for I will save them a long process of reasoning on the subject, by stating, that all this clatter of laughter and comic uproar proceeds from a principle that does honour to Paddy's heart—I mean sympathy with those whom the death of some dear relative has thrown into affliction. Indeed no people sympathize more deeply with each other than the Irish, or enter more fully into the spirit that prevails, whether it be one of joy or sorrow. The reason, then, why the neighbours and acquaintances of the deceased flock at night to hold Wakes—the merriest of all merry meetings—frequently in the very house where he or she lies dead, is simply that the sense of the bereavement may be mitigated by the light-hearted amusements which are enacted before their eyes. The temperament of the Irish, however, is strongly susceptible of the extremes of mirth and sorrow, and our national heart is capable of being moved by the two impulses almost at the same moment. Many a time I have seen a widow sitting over the dead body of an affectionate husband, amidst her desolate orphans, so completely borne away by the irresistible fun of some antic wag, who acted as Master of the Revels, that she has been forced into a fit of laughter that brought other tears than those of sorrow to her eyes. Often has the father—the features of the pious and chaste mother of his children composed into the mournful stillness of death before him—been, in the same manner, carried into a fit of immoderate mirth on witnessing the inimitable drolleries exhibited in "Boxing the Connaughtman," or the convulsive fun of the "Screw-pin Dance." The legends and tales and stories that are told at Irish wakes all bear the impress of this mad extravagance; and it is because I am now about to relate one of them, that I have deemed it expedient to introduce it to my readers by this short but necessary preface. Those who peruse it are not to imagine that I am gravely writing it in my study; but that, on the contrary, they are sitting in the chimney-corner, at an Irish wake, and that some

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droll *Senachie*, his face lit up into an expression of broad farcical humour, is proceeding somewhat as follows :—

"Moll Roe Rafferty was the son—daughter I mane—of ould Jack Rafferty, who was remarkable for a habit he had of always wearing his head undher his hat; but indeed the same family was a quare one, as every body knew that was acquainted wid them. It was said of them—but whether it was thrue or not I won't undhertake to say, for 'fraid I'd tell a lie—that whenever they didn't wear shoes or boots they always went barefooted; but I hard aftherwards that this was disputed, so rather than say anything to injure their caracther, I'll let that pass. Now, ould Jack Rafferty had two sons, Paddy and Molly—hut! what are you all laughing at?—I mane a son and daughter, and it was generally believed among the neighbours, that they were brother and sisther, which you know might be thrue or it might not; but that's a thing that, wid the help o' goodness, we have nothing to say to. Throth there was many ugly things put out on them that I don't wish to repate, such as that neither Jack nor his son Paddy ever walked a perch widout puttin' one foot afore the other, like a salmon; an' I know it was whispered about, that whinever Moll Roe slep', she had an out of the way custom of keepin' her eyes shut. If she did, however, God forgive her—the loss was her own; for sure we all know that when one comes to shut their eyes they can't see as far before them as another.

"Moll Roe was a fine young bouncin' girl, large and lavish, wid a purty head o' hair on her like scarlet, that bein' one of the raisons why she was called *Roe* or red; her arms an' cheeks were much the colour of the hair, an' her saddle nose was the purtiest thing of its kind that ever was on a face. Her fists—for, thank goodness, she was well sarved wid them too—had a strong simularity to two thumpin' turnips, reddened by the sun; an' to keep all right and tight, she had a temper as fiery as her head—for, indeed, it was well known that all the

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Rafferties were *warm*-hearted. Howandiver, it appears that God gives nothing in vain, and of course the same fists, big and red as they were, if all that is said about them is thrue, were not so much given to her for ornament as use. At laist, takin' them in connexion wid her lively temper, we have it upon good authority, that there was no danger of their getting blue-moulded for want of practice. She had a twist, too, in one of her eyes that was very becomin' in its way, and made her poor husband, when she got him, take it into his head that she could see round a corner. She found him out in many quare things, widout doubt; but whether it was owin' to that or not I wouldn't undertake to say, *for fraid I'd tell a lie.*

"Well, begad, anyhow, it was Moll Roe that was the *dilsy;* and as they say that marriages does be *sometimes* made in heaven, so did it happen that there was a nate vagabone in the neighbourhood, just as much overburdened wid beauty as herself, and he was named Gusty Gillespie. Gusty, the Lord guard us, was what they call a black-mouth Prosbytarian, and wouldn't keep Christmas day, the blagard, except what they call "ould style." Gusty was rather good-lookin' when seen in the dark, as well as Moll herself; and indeed it was purty well known that—accordin' as the talk went—it was in nightly meetings that they had an opportunity of becomin' detached to one another. The quensequence was, that in due time both families began to talk very seriously as to what was to be done. Moll's brother, Pawdien O'Rafferty, gave Gusty the best of two choices. What they were it's not worth spakin' about; but at any rate *one* of them was a poser, an' as Gusty knew his man, he soon came to his senses. Accordianly everything was deranged for their marriage, and it was appointed that they should be spliced by the Rev. Samuel M'Shuttle, the Prosbytarian parson, on the following Sunday.

"Now this was the first marriage that had happened for a long time in the neighbourhood betune a black-mouth an' a

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Catholic, an' of coorse there was strong objections on both sides aginst it; an' begad, only for one thing it would never 'a' tuck place at all. At any rate, faix, there was one of the bride's uncles, ould Harry Connolly, a fairy-man, who could cure all complaints wid a secret he had, and as he didn't wish to see his niece marrid upon sich a fellow, he fought bittherly aginst the match. All Moll's friends, however, stood up for the marriage barrin' him, an' of coorse the Sunday was appointed, as I said, that they were to be dove-tailed together.

"Well, the day arrived, and Moll, as became her, went to mass, and Gusty to meeting, afther which they were to join one another in Jack Rafferty's, where the priest, Father M'Sorley, was to slip up afther mass to take his dinner wid them, and to keep Misther M'Shuttle, who was to marry them, company. Nobody remained at home but ould Jack Rafferty an' his wife, who stopped to dress the dinner, for to tell the truth it was to be a great let out entirely. Maybe, if all was known, too, that Father M'Sorley was to give them a cast of his office over an' above the Ministher, in regard that Moll's friends weren't altogether satisfied at the kind of marriage which M'Shuttle could give them. The sorrow may care about that—splice here—splice there—all I can say is, that when Mrs. Rafferty was goin' to tie up a big bag pudden, in walks Harry Connolly, the fairy-man, in a rage, and shouts out,—'Blood and blunderbushes, what are yez here for?'

"'Arra why, Harry? Why, avick?'

"'Why, the sun 's in the suds and the moon in the high Horicks; there's a clipstick comin' an, an' there you're both as unconsarned as if it was about to rain mether. Go out and cross yourselves three times in the name o' the four Mandromarvins, for as prophecy says:—Fill the pot, Eddy, supernaculum—a blazing star 's a rare spectaculum. Go out both of you and look at the sun, I say, an' ye'll see the condition he's in—off!'

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"Begad, sure enough, Jack gave a bounce to the door, and his wife leaped like a two-year ould, till they were both got on a stile beside the house to see what was wrong in the sky.

"'Arra, what is it, Jack,' said she, 'can you see anything?'

"'No,' says he, 'sorra the full o' my eye of anything I can spy, barrin' the sun himself, that's not visible in regard of the clouds. God guard us! I doubt there's something to happen.'

"'If there wasn't, Jack, what 'ud put Harry, that knows so much, in the state he's in?'

"'I doubt it's this marriage,' said Jack: 'betune ourselves, it's not over an' above religious for Moll to marry a black-mouth, an' only for——, but it can't be helped now, though you see, the divil a taste o' the sun is willin' to show his face upon it.'

"'As to that,' says the wife, winkin' wid both her eyes, 'if Gusty's satisfied wid Moll, it's enough. I know who'll carry the whip hand, any how; but in the mane time let us ax Harry 'ithin what ails the sun.'

"Well, they accordianly went in an' put the question to him.

"'Harry, what's wrong, ahagur? What is it now, for if anybody alive knows, 'tis yourself?'

"'Ah!' said Harry, screwin' his mouth wid a kind of a dhry smile, 'the sun has a hard twist o' the cholic; but never mind that, I tell you you'll have a merrier weddin' than you think, that's all;' and havin' said this, he put on his hat and left the house.

"Now, Harry's answer relieved them very much, and so, afther calling to him to be back for the dinner, Jack sat down to take a shough o' the pipe, and the wife lost no time in tying up the pudden and puttin' it in the pot to be boiled.

"In this way things went on well enough for a while, Jack smokin' away, an' the wife cookin' and dhressin' at the rate of a hunt. At last Jack, while sittin', as I said, contentedly at

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the fire, thought he could persave an odd dancin' kind of motion in the pot, that puzzled him a good deal.

"'Katty,' said he, 'what the dickens is in this pot on the fire?'

"'Nerra thing but the big pudden. Why do you ax?' says she.

"'Why,' said he, 'if ever a pot tuck it into its head to dance a jig, and this did. Thundher and sparables, look at it!'

"Begad, it was thrue enough; there was the pot bobbin' up an' down and from side to side, jiggin' it away as merry as a grig; an' it was quite aisy to see that it wasn't the pot itself, but what was inside of it, that brought about the hornpipe.

"'Be the hole o' my coat,' shouted Jack, 'there's something alive in it, or it would never cut sich capers!'

"'Be the vestment, there is, Jack; something sthrange entirely has got into it. Wirra, man alive, what's to be done?'

"Jist as she spoke, the pot seemed to cut the buckle in prime style, and afther a spring that 'ud shame a dancin'-masther, off flew the lid, and out bounced the pudden itself, hoppin', as nimble as a pea on a drum-head, about the floor. Jack blessed himself, and Katty crossed herself. Jack shouted, and Katty screamed. 'In the name of the nine Evangels,' said he, 'keep your distance, no one here injured you!'

"The pudden, however, made a set at him, and Jack lepped first on a chair and then on the kitchen table to avoid it. It then danced towards Katty, who was now repatin' her pather an' avys at the top of her voice, while the cunnin' thief of a pudden was hoppin' and jiggin' it round her, as if it was amused at her distress.

"'If I could get the pitchfork,' said Jack, 'I'd dale wid it — by goxty I'd thry its mettle.'

"'No, no,' shouted Katty, thinkin' there was a fairy in it;

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'let us spake it fair. Who knows what harm it might do. Aisy now,' said she to the pudden, 'aisy, dear; don't harm honest people that never meant to offend you. It wasn't us—no, in throth, it was ould Harry Connolly that bewitched you; pursue *him* if you wish, but spare a woman like me; for, whisper, dear, I'm not in a condition to be frightened—throth I'm not.'

"The pudden, bedad, seemed to take her at her word, and danced away from her towards Jack, who, like the wife, believin' there was a fairy in it, an' that spakin' it fair was the best plan, thought he would give it a soft word as well as her.

"'Plase your honour,' said Jack, 'she only spaiks the truth. You don't know what harm you might do her; an', upon my voracity, we both feels much oblaiged to your honour for your quietness. Faith, it's quite clear that if you weren't a gentlemanly pudden all out, you'd act otherwise. Ould Harry, the dam' rogue, is your mark; he's jist gone down the road there, and if you go fast you'll overtake him. Be me song, your dancin'-masther did his duty, any how. Thank your honour! God speed you, an' may you never meet wid a priest, parson, or alderman in your thravels!'

"Jist as Jack spoke, the pudden appeared to take the hint, for it quietly hopped out, and as the house was directly on the road side, turned down towards the bridge, the very way that ould Harry went. It was very natural of coorse that Jack and Katty should go out to see how it intended to thravel; and, as the day was Sunday, it was but natural, too, that a greater number of people than usual were passin' the road. This was a fact. And when Jack and his wife were seen followin' the pudden, the whole neighbourhood was soon up and afther it.

"'Jack Rafferty, what is it? Katty, ahagur, will you tell us what it manes?'

"'Why,' replied Katty, 'be the vestments, it 's my big

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pudden that's bewitched, an' it's now hot-foot pursuin'——, here she stopped, not wishin' to mention her brother's name,—'*some one* or other that surely put *pistrogues* an it'.*

"This was enough; Jack, now seein' that he had assistance, found his courage comin' back to him, so says he to Katty, 'go home,' says he, 'an' lose no time in makin' another pudden as good, an' here's Paddy Scanlan's wife, Bridget, says she'll let you boil it on her fire, as you'll want our own to dress the rest o' the dinner; and Paddy himself will lend me a pitchfork, for divle resave the morsel of that same pudden will escape till I let the wind out of it, now that I've the neighbours to back an' support me,' says Jack.

"This was agreed to, and Katty went back to prepare a fresh pudden, while Jack an' half the townland pursued the other wid spades, graips, pitchforks, scythes, flails, and all possible description of instruments. On the pudden went, however, at the rate of about six Irish miles an hour, an' divle sich a chase ever was seen. Catholics, Prodestans, an' Prosbytarians were all afther it, armed as I said, an' bad end to the thing but its own activity could save it. Here it made a hop, and there a prod was made at it; but off it went, an' some one as aiger to get a slice at it on the other side, got the prod instead of the pudden. Big Frank Farrell, the miller of Ballyboulteen, got a prod backwards that brought a hullabaloo out of him you might hear at the other end of the parish. One got a slyce of a scythe, another a whack of a flail, a third a rap of a spade that made him look nine ways at wanst.

"'Where is it goin'?' asked one.

"'It's goin' to mass,' replied a second. 'Then it's a Catholic pudden,' exclaimed a third—'down wid it.' 'No,' said a fourth, 'it's above superstition; my life for you, it's on it's way to Meeting. Three cheers for it, if it turns to

* Put it under fairy influence.

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Carntaul.' 'Prod the sowl out of it, if it's a Prodestan,' shouted the others; 'if it turns to the left, slice it into pancakes. We'll have no Prodestan' puddens here.'

"Begad, by this time the people were on the point of beginnin' to have a regular fight about it, when, very fortunately, it took a short turn down a little by-lane that led towards the Methodist praichin-house, an' in an instant all parties were in an uproar aginst it as a Methodist pudden. 'It's a Wesleyan,' shouted several voices 'an' by this an' by that, into a Methodist chapel it won't put a foot to-day, or we'll lose a fall. Let the wind out of it. Come, boys, where's your pitchforks?'

"The divle purshue the one of them, however, ever could touch the pudden, an' jist when they thought they had it up against the gavel of the Methodist chapel, begad it gave them the slip, and hops over to the left, clane into the river, and sails away before all their eyes as light as an egg-shell.

"Now, it so happened, that a little below this place, the demesne-wall of Colonel Bragshaw was built up to the very edge of the river on each side of its banks; and so findin' there was a stop put to their pursuit of it, they went home again, every man, woman, and child of them, puzzled to think what the pudden was at all—whether Catholic, Prodestan, Prosbytarian, or Methodist—what it meant, or where it was goin'! Had Jack Rafferty an' his wife been willin' to let out the opinion they held about Harry Connolly bewitchin' it, there is no doubt of it but poor Harry might be badly trated by the crowd, when their blood was up. They had sense enough, howandiver, to keep that to themselves, for Harry bein' an ould bachelor, was a kind friend to the Raffertys. So, of coorse, there was all kinds of talk about it—some guessin' this, and some guessin' that—one party sayin' the pudden was of their side, another party denyin' it, an' insistin' it belonged to them, an' so on.

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"In the mane time, Katty Rafferty, for 'fraid the dinner might come short, went home and made another pudden much about the same size as the one that had escaped, and bringin' it over to their next neighbour, Paddy Scanlan's, it was put into a pot and placed on the fire to boil, hopin' that it might be done in time, espishilly as they were to have the priest an' the ministher, and that both loved a warm slice of a good pudden as well as e'er a pair of gintlemen in Europe.

"Anyhow, the day passed; Moll and Gusty were made man an' wife, an' no two could be more lovin'. Their friends that had been asked to the weddin' were saunterin' about in pleasant little groups till dinner time, chattin' an' laughin'; but, above all things, sthrivin' to account for the figaries of the pudden, for, to tell the truth, its adventures had now gone through the whole parish.

"Well, at any rate, dinner-time was dhrawin' near, and Paddy Scanlan was sittin' comfortably wid his wife at the fire, the pudden boilen before their eyes, when in walks Harry Connolly, in a flutter, shoutin'—'Blood an' blunderbushes, what are yez here for?'

"'Arra, why, Harry—why, avick?' said Mrs. Scanlan.

"'Why,' said Harry, 'the sun's in the suds an' the moon in the high Horicks! Here's a clipstick comin' an, an' there you sit as unconsarned as if it was about to rain mether! Go out an' cross yourselves three times in the name of the four Mandromarvins, for, as prophecy says:—Fill the pot, Eddy, supernaculum—a blazin' star's a rare spectaculum! Go out both of you, an' look at the sun, I say, and ye'll see the condition he's in—off!'

"'Ay, but, Harry, what's that rowled up in the tail of your cothamore (big coat)?'

"'Out wid yez,' said Harry; 'cross yourselves three times in the name of the four Mandromarvins, an' pray aginst the clipstick—the sky's fallin'!'

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"Begad, it was hard to say whether Paddy or the wife got out first, they were so much alarmed by Harry's wild thin face, an' piercin' eyes; so out they went to see what was wondherful in the sky, an' kep' lookin' an' lookin' in every direction, but divle a thing was to be seen, barrin' the sun shinin' down wid great good humour, an' not a single cloud in the sky.

"Paddy an' the wife now came in laughin', to scould Harry, who, no doubt, was a great wag, in his way, when he wished. 'Musha, bad scran to you, Harry——.' They had time to say no more, howandiver, for, as they were goin' into the door, they met him comin' out of it wid a reek of smoke out of his tail, like a lime-kiln.

"'Harry,' shouted Bridget, 'my sowl to glory, but the tail of your cothamore's a-fire—you'll be burned. Don't you see the smoke that's out of it?'

"'Cross yourselves three times,' said Harry, widout stoppin', or even lookin' behind him—'cross yourselves three times in the name of the four Mandromarvins, for, as the prophecy says:—Fill the pot, Eddy——' They could hear no more, for Harry appeared to feel like a man that carried something a great deal hotter than he wished, as any one might see by the liveliness of his motions, and the quare faces he was forced to make as he went along.

"'What the dickens is he carryin' in the skirts of his big coat,' asked Paddy.

"'My sowl to happiness, but maybe he has stole the pudden,' said Bridget, 'for it's known that many a sthrange thing he does.'

"They immediately examined the pot, but found that the pudden was there as safe as tuppence, an' this puzzled them the more, to think what it was he could be carryin' about wid him in the manner he did. But little they knew what he had done while they were sky-gazin'!

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"Well, anyhow, the day passed and the dinner was ready, an' no doubt but a fine gatherin' there was to partake of it. The priest and the Prosbytarian ministher had met the Methodist praicher—a divilish stretcher of an appetite he had, in throth—on their way to Jack Rafferty's, an' as they knew they could take the liberty, why they insisted on his dinin' wid them; for, afther all, begad, in thim times the clargy of all discriptions lived upon the best footin' among one another, not all as one as now—but no matther. Well, they had nearly finished their dinner, when Jack Rafferty himself axed Katty for the pudden; but, jist as he spoke, in it came as big as a mess-pot.

"'Gintlemen,' said he, 'I hope none of you will refuse tastin' a bit of Katty's pudden; I don't mane the dancin' one that tuck to its thravels to-day, but a good solid fellow that she med since.'

"'To be sure we won't,' replied the priest; 'so, Jack, put a thrifle on them three plates at your right hand, and send them over here to the clargy, an' maybe,' he said, laughin'—for he was a droll good-humoured man—'maybe, Jack, we won't set you a proper example.'

"'Wid a heart an' a half, yer reverence an' gintlemen; in throth, it's not a bad example ever any of you set us at the likes, or ever will set us, I'll go bail. An' sure I only wish it was betther fare I had for you; but we're humble people, gintlemen, and so you can't expect to meet here what you would in higher places.'

"'Betther a male of herbs,' said the Methodist praicher, where pace is——.' He had time to go no farther, however, for, much to his amazement, the priest and the ministher started up from the table jist as he was goin' to swallow the first spoonful of the pudden, and before you could say Jack Robinson, started away at a lively jig down the floor.

"At this moment a neighbour's son came runnin' in, an'

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tould them that the parson was comin' to see the new-married couple, an' wish them all happiness; an' the words were scarcely out of his mouth when he made his appearance. What to think he knew not, when he saw the priest an' ministher footing it away at the rate of a weddin'. He had very little time, however, to think, for, before he could sit down, up starts the Methodist praicher, and clappin' his two fists in his sides, chimes in in great style along wid them.

"'Jack Rafferty,' says he—and, by the way, Jack was his tenant—'what the dickens does all this mane?' says he; 'I'm amazed!'

"'The divle a particle o' me can tell you,' says Jack; 'but will your reverence jist taste a morsel o' pudden, merely that the young couple may boast that you ait at their weddin'; for sure if *you* wouldn't, *who* would?'

"'Well,' says he, 'to gratify them I will; so just a morsel. But, Jack, this bates Bannagher,' says he again, puttin' the spoonful o' pudden into his mouth, 'has there been dhrink here?'

"'Oh, the divle a *spudh*,' says Jack, 'for although there's plinty in the house, faith, it appears the gintlemen wouldn't wait for it. Unless they tuck it elsewhere, I can make nothin' of this.'

"He had scarcely spoken, when the parson, who was an active man, cut a caper a yard high, an' before you could bless yourself, the four clargy were hard at work dancin', as if for a wager. Begad, it would be unpossible for me to tell you the state the whole meetin' was in when they seen this. Some were hoarse wid laughin'; some turned up their eyes wid wondher; many thought them mad, an' others thought they had turned up their little fingers a thrifle too often.

"'Be goxty, it's a burnin' shame,' said one, 'to see four clargy in sich a state at this early hour!' 'Thundher an' ounze, what's over them at all?' says others; 'why, one would think they're bewitched. Holy Moses, look at the caper the

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Methodist cuts! An' Father M'Sorley! *Honam an dioual!* who would think he could handle his feet at sich a rate! Be this an' be that, he cuts the buckle, and does the threblin step aiquil to Paddy Horaghan, the dancin'-masther himself! An' see! Bad cess to the morsel of the ministher an' the parson that's not hard at *Pease upon a trencher*, an' it of a Sunday too! Whirroo, gintlemen, the fun's in yez afther all—whish! more power to yez!'

"The sorra's own fun they had, an' no wondher; but judge of what they felt, when all at once they saw ould Jack Rafferty himself bouncin' in among them, and footing it away like the best o' them. Bedad no play could come up to it, an' nothin' could be heard but laughin', shouts of encouragement, and clappin' of hands like mad. Now the minute Jack Rafferty left the chair where he had been carvin' the pudden, ould Harry Connolly comes over and claps himself down in his place, in ordher to send it round, of coorse; an' he was scarcely sated, when who should make his appearance but Barney Hartigan, the piper. Barney, by the way, had been sent for early in the day, but bein' from home when the message for him went, he couldn't come any sooner.'

"'Begorra,' said Barney, 'you're airly at the work, gintlemen! Oh, blessed Phadrig!—the clargy too! *Honam an dioual,* what does this mane? But, divle may care, yez shan't want the music while there's a blast in the pipes, any how!' So sayin' he gave them Jig Polthogue, an' after that Kiss my Lady, in his best style.

"In the meantime the fun went on thick an' threefold, for it must be remimbered that Harry, the ould knave, was at the pudden; an' maybe he didn't sarve it about in double quick time too. The first he helped was the bride, and, before you could say chopstick, she was at it hard an' fast before the Methodist praicher, who immediately quit Father M'Sorley, and gave a jolly spring before her that threw them into con-

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vulsions. Harry liked this, and made up his mind soon to find partners for the rest; so he accordianly sent the pudden about like lightnin'; an' to make a long story short, barrin' the piper an' himself, there wasn't a pair o' heels in the house but was as busy at the dancin' as if their lives depinded on it.'

"'Barney,' says Harry, 'jist taste a morsel o' this pudden, divle the sich a bully of a pudden ever you ett; here, your sowl! thry a snig of it—it's beautiful.'

"'To be sure I will,' says Barney, 'I'm not the boy to refuse a good thing; but, Harry, be quick, for you know my hands is engaged; an' it would be a thousand pities not to keep them in music, an' they so well inclined. Thank you, Harry; begad that is a famous pudden; but blood an' turnips, what's this for!'

"The word was scarcely out of his mouth when he bounced up, pipes an' all, an' dashed into the middle of them. 'Hurroo, your sowls, let us make a night of it! The Ballyboulteen boys for ever! Go it, your reverence—turn your partner—heel an' toe, ministher. Good! Well done again.—Whish! Hurroo! Here's for Ballyboulteen, an' the sky over it!'

"Bad luck to the sich a set ever was seen together in this world, or will again, I suppose. The worst, however, wasn't come yet, for jist as they were in the very heat an' fury of the dance, what do you think comes hoppin' in among them but another pudden, as nimble an' merry as the first! That was enough; they all had heard of—the clargy among the rest—an' most o' them had seen the other pudden, and knew that there must be either the divle or a fairy in it, sure enough. Well, as I said, in it comes to the thick o' them; but the very appearance of it was enough. Off the four clargy danced, and off the whole weddiners danced after them, every one makin' the best of their way home; but divle a sowl of them able to break out of the step, if they were to be hanged for it. Throth it wouldn't lave a laugh in you to see the priest an' the parson dancin'

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down the road on their way home together, and the ministher and Methodist praicher cuttin' the buckle as they went along in the opposite direction. To make short work of it, they all danced home at last, wid scarce a puff of wind in them; the bride and bridegroom danced away to bed; an' now, boys, come an' let us dance the *Horo Lheig* in the barn 'idout. But you see, boys, before we go, an' in ordher that I may make every thing plain, I had as good tell you, that Harry, in crossing the bridge of Ballyboulteen, a couple of miles below Squire Bragshaw's demesne-wall, saw the puddin' floaten down the river—the thruth is he was waitin' for it; but be this as it may, he took it out, for the wather had made it as clane as a new pin, and tuckin' it up in the tail of his big coat, contrived, as you all guess, I suppose, to change it while Paddy Scanlon an' the wife were examinin' the sky; an' for the other, he contrived to bewitch it in the same manner, by gettin' a fairy to go into it, for, indeed, it was purty well known that the same Harry was hand an' glove wid the *good people.* Others will tell you that it was half a pound of quicksilver he put into it; but that doesn't stand to raison. At any rate, boys, I have tould you the adventures of the Mad Pudden of Ballyboulteen; but I don't wish to tell you many other things about it that happened—*for fraid I'd tell a lie.*"*

* This superstition of the dancing or bewitched pudding has not, so far as I have been able to ascertain, ever been given to the public before. The singular tendency to saltation is attributed to two causes, both of which are introduced in the tale. Some will insist that a fairy-man or fairy-woman has the power to bewitch a pudding by putting a fairy into it; whilst others maintain that a competent portion of quicksilver will make it dance over half the parish.

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BARNEY BRADY'S GOOSE;

OR,

DARK DOINGS AT SLATHBEG.

Barney Brady was a good-natured, placid man, and never lost his temper, unless, as he said himself, when he got "privication;" he was also strict in attending his duty; a fact which Mrs., or rather, as she was called, Ailey Brady, candidly and justly admitted, and to which the priest himself bore ample testimony. Barney, however, had the misfortune to be married at a time when a mystery was abroad among women. Mysteries, resembling the Eleusinian in nothing but the exclusion of men, were then prevalent among the matrons in all parts of the country. Of the nature of these secret rites it would be premature now to speak; in time the secret will be revealed; suffice it to say, that the mysteries were full of alarm to the husbands, and held by them to be a grievous offence against their welfare and authority. The domestic manners of my beloved countrywomen were certainly in a state of awful and deplorable transition at the time, and many a worthy husband's head ached at a state of things which no viligance on his part could alter or repress. Many a secret consultation was held among the good men of the respective villages throughout the country at large, as to the best mode of checking this disastrous epidemic, which came home to their very beds and bosoms, and many a groan was vainly uttered from hearts that grew heavy in proportion as the evil, which they felt but could not see, spread about through all directions of the kingdom.

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Nay, to such a height did this terrible business rise, that the aggrieved parties had notions of petitioning the king to keep their wives virtuous; but this, upon second consideration, was given up, inasmuch as the king himself, with reverence be it spoken, was at the bottom of the evil, and what was still worse, even the queen was not ashamed to corrupt their wives by her example. How then could things be in a healthy state when the very villany of which the good broken-hearted men complained descended from the court to the people? A warning this to all future sovereigns not without good forethought, and much virtuous consideration, to set a bad precedent to their subjects. What then could the worthy husbands do unless to put their hands dolorously to their heads and bear their grievances in silence; which, however, the reader perceives they did not. After mutually, but with great caution, disclosing their injuries, they certainly condoled with each other; they planned means of redress, sought out the best modes of detection, and having entered into a general confederacy against their respective wives, each man solemnly promised to become a spy and informer in his own family. To come to this resolution was as much as they could do under such unhappy circumstances, and of course they did it.

Their wives, on the other hand, were anything but idle. *They* also sat in secret council upon their own affairs, and discussed their condition with an anxiety and circumspection which set the vigilance of their husbands at complete defiance. And it may be observed here, just to show the untractable obstinacy of women when bent on gratifying their own wills, that not one of them ever returned home to her husband from these closed-door meetings, without having committed the very act of which she was suspected. Not that these cautious good women were, after all, so successful in every instance as to escape detection. Some occasional discoveries were actually made in consequence of the systematic *espionage* of their hus-

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bands, and one or two of them were actually caught, as the law term has it, *with the maner*, that is, in the very act of offence. Now, contumacy is ever impudent and outrageous, and disposed to carry every thing with a high hand, or, at all events, with a loud tongue. This, the husbands of those who had been detected soon felt; for, no sooner had they proclaimed their wrongs to their fellow-sufferers than they were branded by their wives with the vile and trying epithet of "*stag*,"* and intrepidly charged home with letting themselves sink to the mean-spirited office of informers against the wives of their bosoms.

Some of the good men now took fire, and demanded an explanation; others looked at their wives with amazement, and stopped short, as if irresolute how to act; and other some shrugged their shoulders, took a silent and meditative blast of the pipe upon the hob, and said no more about it. So far, then, there was no great victory either on the one side or the other. Now, the state of human society is never so bad, even in the most depraved times, but that there are always to be found in it many persons uncorrupted by the prevailing contamination; and it was supposed to be so here. Barney Brady as yet hoped in heaven that Ailey had escaped the contagion, which operated upon her sex so secretly, yet so surely. For some time past he had held her under strict *surveillance*; but with such judgment, that she did not even dream of being suspected. In this manner did matters proceed between them —Barney slyly on the alert, and Ailey on a shrewd look-out for means and opportunity; when one Friday he proposed to

* We need scarcely tell our readers that in Ireland "*stag*" means a person who becomes king's evidence against his accomplices, or in some indirect way exposes their crimes. If, for instance, a member of a Ribbon or Orange Lodge betrayed the secrets of the body, he would be termed a "stag;" and a husband betraying any weakness of his wife, such, for instance, as the fact of her being addicted to liquor, or theft, would be termed a "stag" by his offended partner.

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visit his aunt Madge, up in Carrickmore, on the next Saturday evening; and, accordingly, informed Ailey that he would not return until the Monday following. To this Ailey could offer no possible objection; but, on the contrary, highly applauded him for showing such a mark of respect and affection for his aunt, who, by the way, had been very kind to them both since their marriage. "It's only right," said she, "and your duty besides, to go an' see her, for bewixt you an' me, Barney, she has been the best feadher in our wing. There's thim Finnigans, the dirty, low pack, sure, bekase indeed they're the same relations to her that we are, they'd kiss the dirt of her feet, if they thought they could bone a penny by it; an' they're lavin' no stone unturned to get the soft side of her, hopin', the dirty squad o' *cabogues*,* to come in for what she has, an' to cut us out from her. So go to her, Barney; an' if you don't palaver her, the sorrow one o' you's worth a pound o' goats' wool."

Barney, having then got on a clean shirt and his holy-day frieze coat, took his shilellah in hand, and set out to visit his aunt Madge Brady, up among the hills of Carrickmore, as a most attached and disinterested nephew, who, as the song says, "loved her for herself alone." He had not gone many yards from the door, however, when he returned.

"Madge," said he, "I'm jist goin' to mention to you afore I set out, that I'd as soon you'd keep away from the Maguigans; I mane the women of them. Both their husbands tould me not a month o' Sundays agone, that they suspect them to be not safe. So you see you can learn nothing that's good from them. God's thruth is, I'm afeard that they're tarr'd wid the same stick that has marked the women o' the whole neighbourhood. So now, that you know this, I hope you'll keep your distance from them."

"Arra, what business, Barney, could I have wid them?

* Low person; a term of contempt.

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The sorra eye I layed on one o' them this fortnight back. I have my own business on these two childre, the crathurs, to take care of."

"That's a darlin', Madge, give us a smack; an' now *banaghth lath*, till Monday, please goodness. Kiss me, childre. Hadn't you betthur tie a bit of flannin about poor Barney's neck, till that cough laves him?"

"Don't you see it dhryin' there, on the stool, before the fire?"

"That's right. Now, you'll mind my words, Ailey."

"Arra, bad scran be from me, but you'd—so you would, arra——"

She spoke this with an indignant abruptness; but the reader will please to observe, that she made no promise whatsoever.

"I'm off, I'm off. I know you won't. God bless yez all!"

And so Barney went to see his aunt Madge, up in Carrickmore.

Well! it is a sad thing to be a mere chronicler of truth, which, indeed, every man who delineates human nature must be; because unhappily for him who lives in the world of human nature, there is no fiction at hand. It is only those who live out of it that can make fiction available to their purposes. This has been forced from us, not by Barney, however, but by his wife.

He had scarcely been half an hour gone, when Ailey threw a bonnet on her head, a blue cloak about her shoulders, and after having "made a play" for the children, to keep them quiet, and given them a slice of griddle-bread each, she locked the door, rolled the big stone upon the hole that was under it, which the pig had grubbed away, in order to work himself a passage into the house, and immediately proceeded to visit the two tainted wives of the Maguigans! The act was—but it is not for us to characterize it; the consequences of it will speak for themselves. The two brothers to whom they were united

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in wedlock, lived next door to each other, or, what is called, under the same roof; and she, consequently, found both their good women at home. Two or three "slips" of both sexes, who had been amusing themselves in the elder brother's house, where the conference resulting from her visit was about to be held, were immediately desired to play abroad, "an' not be gamestherin' an' rampadghin' through the house that way, makin' a ruction, that people can't hear their own ears wid yez; go along, an' take the sthreets on your head, and sthretch your limbs, ye pack o' young thieves, yez!"

The moment they bounded away, Ailey's face assumed an air of considerable importance—a circumstance which the others instantly noticed; for nothing is so observant of symptoms that indicate its own discovery as a consciousness of error.

"Ailey," said one of them, alarmed, "you've heard something? What is it? Are we found out, clane?"

"If you're not found out," replied Ailey, in the same low, guarded tone, "you're strongly suspected; but the devil may care for that. Barney is away up to his ould aunt Madge Brady's, at Carrickmore above, an' won't be back till Monday; so that the coast's clear till then, any way. All you have to do is to slip up about dusk, for there'll be nobody but ourselves, an' I'll put the childhre to bed, not that they dare tell *him* any thing they'd see."

"So, thin, we are suspicted?" said the other, with much chagrin.

"It's thruth. Dick an' Harry confessed it to Barney; an' he tould me."

"Troth, an' we'll outdo them, if they wor ten times as sharp," replied Mrs. Dick Maguigan, or Betty, as she was called. "Indeed, I knew myself that he was for a good while past peepin' and pokin' about, as if he expected to find a leprechaun or a mare's nest; an' faith, sure enough, he was

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wanst widin' an ace of catchin' us; but, as luck would have it, he didn't search undher the bed."

"And I suppose that Barney's backin' them in all this," observed Mrs. Harry Maguigan, or, as we shall call her, Bid.

"Troth, you may swear that," replied his faithful wife; "an' warned me strongly afore he went to the aunt's to hould away from yez both, for he said ye wor tainted, tarred with the same stick that has marked all the rotten sheep in the country."

The three audacious conspirators, instead of expressing either regret or repentance at the conduct which had justified the well-founded suspicions of their husbands, burst out, on the contrary, into one united and harmonious chorus of laughter, which lasted at least five minutes!

"Well," said Ailey, hastily getting up and throwing the cloak about her, "I can't stop a jiffey, for there's no one at home but the childhre, that I locked in; and I'm always unaisy when I lave the crathurs that way, for fraid they might go too near the fire, or that that sarra of a pig 'ud work the stone from undher the door an' get in. So as the coast's clear, you'll both slip up about dusk."

This they promised; and accordingly, when darkness had completely set in, the door of Barney Brady's house was closed, and bolted inside with all possible security; and this was necessary, for truly a surprise would have been an awful, though perhaps a just, winding up of their iniquities. What peculiar mysteries or rites took place there on that night, it is not our province, good reader, to disclose; but of this you may rest assured, that each fulfilled the old and excellent adage, "that stolen enjoyments are the sweetest." With what feelings Betty and Bid Maguigan faced their husbands, they themselves best know; but that each was received with suspicion, and severely cross-examined upon the cause of their absence, we can inform the reader.

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But what did that avail? The delinquents, on their way home, had fabricated a story—and they are never good that possess a facility at fabricating stories,—to which both were determined to adhere with most inflexible pertinacity. "They had jist ran up to see little Madge Brady, for Ailey had been down to tell them that she was afeard it was takin' the mazles; but it was nothin' but a small *rash* that came out upon its breast, the crathur, though Bid (her sister-in-law), thought it was the hives; an' indeed, after all, she didn't know herself but it was. But God send it safe over whatsomever it was, poor thing! Amin, this night!"

Now, who would think?——but no matter; there is still worse to come! The reader will not believe our word, when we assure him that these two women, Betty and Bid Maguigan, did not scruple, though loaded with the just suspicions of their husbands, to kneel down and say their prayers on that very night before they went to bed.

The next day being Sunday, and their husbands having more leisure, it is scarcely necessary to say that the two good men kept a sharp eye upon their spouses, who found themselves dodged in every motion. Several times they attempted a stolen visit to Ailey Brady's, but were detected just in the act of putting on their cloaks and bonnets. In fact, they were so completely hampered, that they resolved, at length, to brazen it out, having lost temper considerably by seeing that all their designs were fairly contravened, and that whatever must be done as to reaching the scene of their transgression, must be done with honest, open defiance. They once more, therefore, had recourse to the cloaks and bonnets; and were in the very act of setting out, when their husbands, who sat smoking each a pipe, after having coolly eyed them for some time, calmly inquired——

"Where are yez bound for, good women?"

"Up to Ailey Brady's, to see the child, poor thing! 'Deed

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it's a burnin' shame that we didn't call sooner, espishilly as Barney's not at home wid her. She may want something, an' has no one to send out for it."

"Well," said Dick, addressing his own wife Betty, "grantin' all that, isn't one o' ye enough to go?"

"Plenty," replied his sister-in-law Bid; "but I've some notion of goin' up as far as my mother's, while Betty's sittin' wid Ailey Brady."

"By the tarlin' sweep!" exclaimed Harry, taking the pipe hastily out of his mouth, and casting a keen, indignant glance at the last speaker,—"yez are enough to bate down the patience of a saint. How can you look us in the face, ye schamers o' the devil? Goin' to see Ailey Brady's child, indeed! Why, I was up wid Ailey Brady this very mornin', an' there's not a blast o' wind wrong wid either of her childhre, not as much as a hair turned on them! What have yez to say, now? An' yit ye came both home last night wid a lie in your mouths; that 'Ailey Brady's child was gettin' the mazles,' says one; 'it has a *rash*,' says the other; 'but sure God send it safe over whatsomever it has, poor thing!' Be the mortal man, I won't bear this. There now, to show yez I won't."

As he spoke the last word he took the pipe out of his mouth and shivered it to atoms against the opposite wall. His brother seeing this energetic display, resolved not to be outdone in the vigour of his indignation.

"Yes, be me sowl, nor I aither," he exclaimed, hurling his dudeen in an opposite direction, and immediately kicking the stool on which he sat to the lower end of the kitchen.

"That's to show yez that ye won't have your tongues in your cheeks at uz," he added; "an' be this an' be that for three sthraws I'd not lave a thraneen's worth on the dhresser but I'd smash to smithereens. An' I'll tell yez what it is," he proceeded, raising his voice to its highest pitch, and stamping

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furiously on the hearth, "I tell yez what it is, yez must put an end to this work, wanst for all. Our substance isn't to go this way. We'll have no collogin' among yez; no huggermuggerin' between you an' the other black sheep o' the neighbourhood. Don't think but we know what's goin' an, an' what brought you both up to Ailey Brady's last night. Too well we know it; an' now I tell yez again that yez must avoid that woman; she's not a safe neighbour, an' her own husband suspects her to be as bad as the worst among them. Ay, an' he'll catch her yet, knowin' as she thinks herself."

"Be the book, I'll turn another pin in *your* nose, my lady," said Harry, addressing Bid; "never fear but I will. I'll make you that you won't have yourself the talk o' the neighbours, an' me, too, that doesn't desarve it. The curse o' Cromwell on me if I don't. Now!"

"Why thin now," said Bid, calmly turning to Betty, "in the name of all that's beautiful, what are these two dunghill cocks at? are they mad? or is it only dhrunk they are?"

"No," replied Betty, "but goin' to bate us I suppose!"

"Ay, very likely," returned the other; "any how they may be proud o' themselves, to join* two women as if we wor fit to fight them. Throth I'm glad their own childhre's not to the fore to see their fine manly behaviour. Come, Betty, are you goin' up to Ailey's? Whether the child's sick or not, the crathur's lonely, as Barney's from home, an' it's a charity to sit a while wid her. Are you comin'?"

"No, nor you aither; the divil a one toe," said her husband.

"The divil take them that says to the conthrairy; come, Betty."

"Ay, if *I* like," said he.

"Ay, whether you like or not, dear; the sarra wan o' me 'ill be stopped by you this day."

* To fall upon—to attack.

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"You won't?"

"I won't, now?"

"Never heed her, Harry," said Dick. "Let her go to ould Nick, her own way; ay, both o' them; off wid yez; but you'll see what 'ill come of it at the long run."

"Where's the Catechiz," said Harry. "I'll take my book oath this minute, that for a month to come, I'll not let you on the one side of the house wid me any how. Will no one tell me where the Catechiz is?"

"An' is that to vex me, Harry; arra, why don't you make it twelve months while your hand's in? It wouldn't be worth your while to switch the primmer for a bare four weeks, man alive!"

"Be me sowl, it's you ought to be switched instead o' the primmer."

"Very well," replied his imperturbable and provoking spouse; "I suppose the next thing you'll do will be to bate us sure enough—but sure we can't help it, only it'll be a fine story to have to tell the neighbours. You'll look well afther it; you may then hould up your head like a man! Oh, ye—— but I won't let myself down to scould wid ye. Come, Betty."

"No," said Betty, "I wouldn't be squabblin' wid them about goin'. It's nothin' to uz one way or the other, so we'll sit here. Oh, thin, God he knows but we're the well-watched women at all evints. Sure if we wor the worst that ever riz this day—ay, if we wor so bad that the very dogs wouldn't lap our blood, we couldn't be thrated worse than we are by thim two men."

"I say again," observed Harry, seeing his wife somewhat irresolute, "that if you go, your breath won't come near me in haste."

"Oh, hould your tongue, man," replied Bid; "I seen the day you thought enough about my breath."

"Faith, an' that was bekase I didn't know you then as well as I do now."

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"That's not what you thought, or what you said aither, when I was ill last harvest, and goin' to die. Sure you wor roarin' about the house like a suckin' calf that had lost its mother, wid your two eyes as red as a pair of sunburnt onions."

"Never heed her," said his brother; "you know she'd bate both of us at the tongue; she's now in her glory."

"Betty," said Bid, addressing her sister-in-law, in a voice exceedingly calm and quiet; that is to say, in the voice of a woman whose contempt alone prevented her from continuing the controversy; "go out, alanna, an' cut me a bit o' greens to put down wid that bacon for the dinner; after that, we'll clane ourselves up, an' be in time for the twelve o'clock mass."

"But what if somebody would run away wid us?" said Betty, laughing.

"Oh, sure," said the other, "that's all they'd want. They'd thin get shut of the two sich villains as we are. Go, alanna, and never mind them—they're not worth our breath, little as they think about it."

"A purty Sunday's mornin' they've made us spind—but no matther—God forgive them for wrongin' us as they're doin'!"

Their two husbands did not go to mass that day, having in fact devoted it to the purpose of ferreting out evidence against their wives. Their exertions, however, were fruitless, although we are bound honestly to state that they left no stone unturned to procure it. The children were taken to task and severely interrogated, but they could prove nothing, except that their mothers were sometimes out for a considerable time, and that they themselves were often sent to play, and that on returning of an odd time sooner than was expected, they found the doors bolted, and heard strange voices within. Of these facts, however, the good men had been apprized before; so that the sum of all they obtained was nothing more than an accession to their uneasiness, without any addition to their knowledge. Both men, indeed, were unusually snappish the whole day,

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especially after the hour of dinner; for each of their wives could observe that her husband often put his hand quietly over to the bole of the hob, and finding that the pipe was not there, vented his spleen upon the cat or dog, if either came in his way, and not unfrequently even upon his own children.

At length Dick got up and was about to go out, when Betty asked, in her turn, "Where he was goin'?"

"Not far," he replied. "I'll be back in a quarther of an hour—too soon for you to have an opportunity of bein' at your ould work."

"If you're afeard o' that," she replied, "hadn't you betther not go at all?"

To this he made no reply, but putting his hands over his brows he stalked gloomily out of the house.

Almost precisely similar was the conduct of his brother, who, after exchanging a random shot or two with Bid, slunk out soon after Dick, but each evidently attempted to conceal from the wife of the other that he had gone out—a circumstance that was clearly proved by Dick declining to pass Harry's door, and Harry Dick's.

Alas! and must I say it?—I must—I must—unhappily the interests of truth compel me to make the disclosure. The two men were no sooner gone, than their irreclaimable wives had an immediate consultation.

"Where's Dick?" asked Bid.

"Why, sure, I thought I'd split," replied Betty, "to see him frettin' the heart out of himself after his pipe. The norra be in me, but it was a'most too much for me to look at him searchin' the hob every five minutes for the dudeen he broke upon the wall in his tantrems this mornin'. I know he's away over to Billy Fulton's to buy one."

"'Twas the same wid Harry," said Bid; "he didn't know which end of him he was sittin' on. He's off too, to the same place; for I watched him through the windy; an' now that the

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coast's clear, let's be off to Ailey, an' have all over afore our two gintlemen comes back; or, in troth they'll skiver us clane."

"The never a lie in that; the house wouldn't hould them if they found us out. But wasn't it lucky that they lost their temper and broke their pipes. If they had kept cool, we would now have no opportunity—come."

And so they proceeded once more to Ailey Brady's; and again the door was locked and bolted; and, as before, the mysteries, whatever they may have been, were re-enacted, and the vigilance and terrors of their husbands became the subject of open ridicule, and much mirth went forward, as might easily be conjectured from the hearty, but somewhat suppressed laughter which an experienced ear might have heard through the door—we say suppressed, for their mirth was expressed, notwithstanding the high spirit of enjoyment which ran through it, in that timid and cautious undertone that dreads discovery.

As their object now was to reach home before the return of their husbands, so was the period of their enjoyments on this evening much more brief than on the preceding. They had very little time to spare, however, for scarcely were the cloaks and bonnets thrown aside, and an air of most decorous and matronly composure assumed, when the good men entered.

"Musha, but that's a long quarther of an hour you stayed," said Betty; "where on airth wor you all this time?"

"I was upon business," returned Dick, "gettin' somethin' to keep me cool against your behavour. Hand me a double sthraw out of the bed there, till I light my pipe. Wor you out since?"

"Was I out since!" returned his wife, with the look of a deeply offended woman; "hut, ay, to be sure—Bid an' myself wor up at Ailey Brady's, an' you niver saw such a piece o' fun as we had. Sure, we're only come in this minnit. Why, upon my throth, Dick, you'd vex an angel from heaven. Was I out!—arra, don't I look very like a woman that was out?"

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"Well, well," rejoined her husband, whiffing away rather placidly from his new pipe; "don't be flyin' out at us like Bid; I'm not sayin' you wor out *this* evenin'; so hould your whisht about it."

"No, but to think—the sorra one——"

"Very well, now—that's enough—be done."

And so the adroit wife grumbled gradually into silence.

The skirmish between Harry and Bid was of a brisker and more animated description, but we need not say on which side the victory settled. The pipe, however, soon produced something like tranquillity, and after a hard bout at a united prayer in the shape of a Rosary between the deceiver and the deceived, both went to bed on very good terms with each other, as indeed after all, did Dick and Betty, not, any more than the others, forgetting their devotions.

The next morning was that on which our absent friend, Barney Brady, was expected home, and about ten or eleven o'clock, Ailey was descanting in conversation with a neighbour upon the kindness and generosity of Aunt Madge, and the greater warmth of affection which, on all occasions, she had manifested towards her and Barney, than ever she had shown to that sleeveen pack of cabogues, the Finnigans, when who should appear but the redoubtable Barney himself, bearing, under his right arm, a fat grey goose, alive and kicking.

"Musha, Barney, what is this?" exclaimed Ailey, as her husband laid the goose down on the floor.

"Why," he replied, good humouredly, "dont you see it's a leg o' mutton that Aunt Madge sent for our dinner on Sunday next? What's that, indeed!"

The goose was immediately taken up—handled like a wonder—balanced, that they might guess its weight—felt that they might know how fat it was, and examined from beak to claw with the most minute inspection. The children approached it with that eager but fearful curiosity for which childhood is

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remarkable. They touched it, retreated with apprehension, took fresh courage, patted it timidly on the back, and after many alternations of terror and delight, the eldest at length ventured to take it up in his arms. This was a disastrous attempt; for the goose, finding him unable to hold it firmly, naturally fluttered its pinions, and the young hero threw it hastily down, and ran screaming behind his mother, where his little sister joined the chorus.

Barney and his wife then entertained the neighbour we spoke of with a history of Aunt Madge's wealth, assuring him confidentially, that they themselves were *down* for every penny and penny's worth belonging to her, pointing to the goose at the same time as a triumphant illustration of their expectations.

No sooner had their friend left them, than Barney, having given Ailey a faithful account of every thing respecting Aunt Madge, said he hoped she had not forgotten his parting advice on Saturday, that she had kept aloof from the tainted wives of the Maguigans, and "neither coshered or harboured with them," in his absence.

"Musha, throth, Barney, afore I'd lead this life, an' be catechized at every hand's turn, I'd rather go out upon the world, and airn my bread honestly, wid my own two hands, as I did afore I met you. The wives o' the Maguigans! Why, what 'ud I be doin' wid the wives o' the Maguigans? or what 'ud the wives o' the Maguigans be doin' wid me? It's little thim or their consarns throubles me—I have my house an' childhre to look afther, an' that's enough for any one woman, I'm thinkin'."

"Well, but sure you needn't be angry wid me for puttin' you on your guard."

"It's not to say that I'm angry wid you—but sure wanst to say a thing ought to be enough—but here you keep knawin' an' aiten at me about the wives o' the Maguigans. Musha, I

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wish to marcy, the same wives o' the Maguigans wor far enough out o' the counthry, for they're the heart-scald to me anyhow."

"Well, well, Ailey; to the sarra wid them; but about another thing,—what'll we do wid this goose? Whether is it betther to roast it or boil it?"

"Arra, Barney, what if we'd not kill it at all, but keep it an' rear a flock ourselves. There's plinty o' wather an' grazin' for them about the place."

"Throth, you're right; come or go what will, we had betther not kill it, the crathur."

"Throth we won't; I don't stand blood well myself; an' I'd as soon, to tell you the thruth, you'd *not* ax me to kill this one *now*, Barney. I don't think it 'ud sarve me."

"Very well," said her husband, yielding to her suggestion with singular good humour; "as it is your wish, the divil resave the drop will lave its carcase this bout—so let it be settled that we'll rear a flock ourselves; an' as you say, Ailey, who knows but the same goose may be sent to us for good luck."

It was so arranged; but as a solitary fowl of that species is rather an unusual sight about a countryman's house, they soon procured it a companion, as they had said, after which they went to bed every night anxious to dream that all its eggs might turn out golden ones to them and to their children.

Now, perhaps, the sagacious reader may have already guessed that the arrival of the goose, whatever it might have been to honest Barney, was an excellent apology for a capital piece of by-play to his wife. The worthy fowl had not in fact, been twenty-four hours at their place, when in came "the two tainted wives of the Maguigans!" This visit was an open one and paid in the evening, a little before the men returned from their daily labour. Great was Barney's astonishment then, when on reaching home, he found Bid and Betty

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Maguigan in conference with Ailey; and what appeared to him remarkably strange, if not rather hardy on their part, was the fact that they carried on the conversation without evincing the slightest consciousness of offence. It is true this had not hitherto been actually proved, but it is needless to say that the suspicion entertained against them was nearly tantamount to proof. Their absences were so difficult to be accounted for, and the situations in which they were found so critical, that it was impossible even for their warmest friends to assert that they were blameless. As Barney entered the house, they addressed him with singular good humour and kindness, but it was easy to infer from his short and monosyllabic replies that they had in his case a strong prejudice to overcome.

"Musha, how are you, Barney?"

"At the present time not comfortable."

This was accompanied by a quick suspicious glance from them to his wife.

"Why, there's nothin' wrong wid you, we hope?"

"Maybe that's more than I can say."

"You're not unwell, sure?"

"No."

"Barney," said the wife; "Bid an' Betty came runnin' up to look at the goose; an' the sorra one o' them but says it's the greatest bully they seen this many a day."

This was meant as a soother;—"for Barney himself," to use the words of Ailey, "was as proud as e'er a one o' the childhre out of the same goose."

His brow cleared a little at this adroit appeal to his vanity, and he sat down with a look of more suavity.

"Why, thin, Barney, it's a nice present all out."

"It's more than the Finnigans would get from Aunt Madge, any way," said Ailey, "for Barney's her favourite."

"Is that by way of news?" asked Barney, whose vanity

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was highly tickled, notwithstanding his assumed indifference. "Every fool knows I was always that."

"It's no secret," observed Betty, who, as well as Bid, knew his weakness here; "an' its only a proof of her own sinse into the bargain. They're a mane pack, thim Finnigans."

"Oh, the scruff o' the airth," exclaimed Bid; "why would you mintion thim an' a dacent man in the one day?"

"Come, Betty," said the other; "my goodness we haven't a minute now, the good men 'ill swear we're about no good if they find us out when they come home."

"Hut," said Barney, "sit a while can't yez? You can do no harm here any how."

"Nor anywhere else, I hope," said Bid; "but, indeed, Barney, you don't know the men they are, or you'd hunt us home like bag-foxes."

"Don't be axin' them to stay, thin," said Ailey; "what they say I believe is thrue enough; an' for my part, I wouldn't wish to have our little place mintioned one way or other, in any dispute that yez may have, Betty."

"Throth," said Bid, "I don't b'lieve they'd think us safe in a chapel; an' God forgive them for it. Come, Betty, if we wish to avoid a battle, we have not a minute to spare. Oh thin, Ailey Brady, it's you that has the good-nathur'd sinsible husband, that doesn't keep you night and day in a state of heart-scald. Throth you're a happy woman. May God spare him to you!"

"Throth, not that he's to the fore himself," rejoined his wife, "I'll say this, that a betther husband never drew breath this day. Divil a word he turns on me wanst in the twelve months."

"We believe it," they replied; "the dacent man's above it; he wouldn't demane himself by skulkin' about, an' watchin' and pokin' his nose into every hole an' corner, the way our mane fellows does be doin', till we can't——bless ourselves for them."

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"No, the sorra thing o' the kind he does; sure I must tell the thruth any way."

"Well, God be wid yez; we must be off. Good bye, Barney, sure you can bear witness for us this bout."

"That I can, Bid, an' will too; God bless yez!"

As they apprehended, their husbands, on returning from their work, were once more in a fume, on finding the good women absent.

"Soh!" said Dick, "is it a fair question to ax where yez war?"

"Fair enough," said Bid.

"You wor at the ould work," observed Harry; "but I tell you what, by the holy St. Countryman we won't suffer this much longer—that's one piece o' thruth for yez!"

"Where war yez, I say?" asked his brother, sternly; "no desate, now; tell us plump an' at wanst where yez war?"

"Why, then, if you want to know," replied Betty, "we wor up seein' Barney Brady's goose."

"Barney Brady's goose!" exclaimed Harry, with a look as puzzled as ever was visible on a human face.

"Barney Brady's goose!" repeated Dick, with a face quite as mystified. The two brothers looked at each other for nearly a minute, but neither could read in the other's countenance any thing like intelligence.

"What are they at?" asked Dick.

"Why, that they have their tongues in their cheeks at us, to be sure," replied the other.

"Why, where else would we have them," said Bid; "it isn't in our pockets you'd have us to carry them?"

"I wish to Jamini they wor any where but where they are," returned her husband. "What do you mane?"

"Jist what we say, that we wor up takin' a look at Barney Brady's goose."

"Why, the curse o' the crows upon you, don't you know that Barney Brady never had a goose in his life?"

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"He has one now then," replied Bid.

"Ay," added her sister, "an' as fine a bully of a goose as ever I seen wid my two livin' eyes."

"Sure," said Bid, "if you won't believe us, can't yez go up an' see?"

This, after all, was putting the matter to a very fair issue, and the two men resolved to take her at her word, each feeling quite satisfied of the egregious falsehood their wives had attempted to make them swallow.

"Come, Dick," said Harry, "put on your hat; the sorra step further we'll let this go till we see it out; an' all I can say is," he added, addressing the women, "that you had betther not be here before us when we come back, if we find you out in a falsity."

They had not gone fifty yards from the door when the laughter of the two women was loud and vehement at the scene which had just occurred, especially at the ingenuity with which Bid had sent them abroad, and thus got the coast clear for their purposes.

"Out wid yez, childhre, an' play awhile—*honom-an-dioul!* Is it ever an' always burnin' your shins over the fire yez are? Away out o' this, an' don't come back till we call yez."

When the children were gone, they brought in two neighbours' wives, who lived immediately beside them, shut and bolted the door, and again did the mysterious rites of which we have so often written, proceed as before. On this occasion, however, there was much caution used, every now and then the door was stealthily opened, and a face might be seen peeping out to prevent a surprise. The conversation was carried on in a tone unusually low, and the laughter, which was frequent, and principally at the expense of their husbands, could scarcely be heard through the door.

In due time, however, the parties dispersed; and when Dick and Harry returned, they found their wives each industriously

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engaged in the affairs of the household, which, indeed, they went through with an air of offended dignity, and a tartness of temper that contrasted strongly with the sheepish and somewhat crest-fallen demeanour of their spouses.

"Musha bad luck to you for a dog an' lave my way, you dirty crooked cur, you," exclaimed Bid, to the dog that innocently crossed her path; "it's purty lives we lead one way or other. We have enough, dear knows, to thry our temper widout you comin' acrass us—ha! you divil's limb! out wid you! Well," she added, after a short pause, "you see we're here before you for all your big threats; but I'll tell you what it is, Harry, upon my sowl you must turn a new lafe or I'll lose a fall. If you or Dick have any thing aginst us, why don't you prove it manfully at wanst, and not be snakin' about the bush the way yez do. The sorra aither of us will lie andher your low, mane thoughts any longer. I hope you seen Barney Brady's goose on your thravels? Faugh upon ye! Throth you ought to be ashamed to rise your head this month to come!"

"Ay, now you're at it," exclaimed Harry, rising and putting on his hat; "but for my part I'll lave you to fight the walls till your tongue tires. All you want is some one to jaw back to you, just to keep the ball goin'. *Bannaght latht* for a while!"

Outside the door he met his brother.

"I was goin' to sit awhile wid you," said Dick; "I can't stand that woman's tongue, good or bad."

"Faith, an' I was jist goin' in to *you*," replied the other; Bid's in her glory; there's no facin' her. Let us go an' sit awhile with Charley Magrath."

"Bad luck to Barney Brady's goose, any how; it'll be a long day till we hear the end of it."

"The curse o' Cromwell on it, but it's the unlucky bird to us this night; sure enough," re-echoed his brother. "Come

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an' let us have a while's shanahas wid Charley till these women settle."

They accordingly went, and ere a lapse of many minutes their wives were again together for the purpose of comparing notes, and of indulging in another hearty laugh at their husbands.

Barney Brady's goose now began to be a goose of some eminence. In short, it was much talked of, and had its character and qualities debated *pro* and *con*. One thing, however, was very remarkable in this business; and that thing was, that the male portion of the neighbours hated it with a cordiality which they could not disguise, whilst their wives, on the other hand, defended it most strenuously against all the calumnious attacks of its enemies. The dreaded change, to which we have before alluded, was now going on rapidly, and it somehow happened that scarcely a family feud connected with it took place within a certain circle of Barney Brady's house, in which his goose was not either directly or indirectly concerned.

Barney himself, whose suspicions had been for a long time lulled by the interest he took in a bird of his own procuring, at length began to look queer at certain glimpses which he caught of what was going forward.

"Ailey," said he, with a good deal of uneasiness, "what brings up them wives o' the Maguigans here, that I spoke so much about?"

"Why, throth, Barney, I thought there was something wrong wid the poor goose, an' I sent down for them."

"By the mortual man, I wish," replied Barney, "that I had never brought the dirty drab of a crathur about the place. Why, if all you say about it is true, it never had a day's health since it came to us, an' yet I'll take my oath it's as fat a goose this minute as ever wagged."

"An' right well you know, Barney, it got delicate afthur it

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came to us: an' it stands to raison,—the crathur fretted afthur them it left behind it."

"No, confusion to the fret; it had no raison in life when it got a comrade to keep it company. Be me sowl it's I that fretted, an' I dunna but I'm the greatest goose o' the two for not wringin' it's head off, an' puttin' a stop to a crew o' women comin' to the place on the head of it. What's wrong wid it now?"

"Why, throth, I didn't know myself till Bid Maguigan tould me. I thought it was sick, but it's not. Sure the poor thing's goin' to clock, an' I must set the eggs for it to-morrow."

"I hope you'll keep your word then," said Barney, "for although it would go against me to harm the crathur, still, I tell you, that if the crew I'm spaken of does be comin' about the place undher pretence of it, be the crass I'll be apt to give it a dog's knock sometime; an' take care, Ailey, that more geese than one won't come in for a knock."

In this instance, however, it so happened that Ailey had truth on her side; the fact, indeed, was unquestionable, and enabled the good women of the neighbourhood to keep their angry husbands quiet for a considerable time afterwards. With some of the latter the report gained ground very slowly, but on ascertaining that it was a fact, many of them felt considerably relieved.

The reader already sees that Barney Brady's goose was really a goose of importance, whose out-goings and in-comings, whose health or illness, weal or woe, involved the ease and comfort, or the doubt and anxiety of a considerable number of persons in the surrounding district. Barney himself, however, felt that her incubation was rather a matter of discomfort to him than otherwise; for had she been up and stirring, he knew that she might be liable to all the "skyey influences" that geese are heirs to. Now, however, Ailey had no apology arising from her to receive visits from the black sheep of the

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neighbourhood, and yet he often detected them, either in his house or leaving it. This troubled him very much, but still Ailey failed not in her excuse, and as he knew she seldom went out, he did not suspect, much less believe, that his own house would or could be made the scene of those private meetings, held by such women as the Maguigans, or others still farther sunk in the practices which were abroad.

Things, however, were ripening, for whilst Barney gravely meditated upon the moral prospect that presented itself in the country, the task of incubation was crowned by the birth of a fine brood of goslings, amounting to eleven out of twelve, every one of which appeared to be healthy, and to give promise in due time of arriving at the full proportion of a goodly goose, allowance being made as usual for fate and foxes.

Our readers are now to suppose two things, first, that the goodly brood is reared; and, secondly, that the mysterious but predominant vice of the neighbourhood is fast increasing. Barney had promised himself a handsome return from the sale of the geese, and hoped in a year or two, to be able, from the proceeds, to buy a cow or a heifer, and never, besides, to be without a good fat dinner at Michaelmas. All this was creditable, and becoming an industrious man. In the meantime he thought that, somehow, the flock appeared lessened in his eye; that is to say, that they looked as a whole, to be rather diminished in number. The thing had struck him before, but in that feeble and indistinct manner which, in easy minds, leaves not an impression behind it which ever leads to the following up of the suggestion. But on this occasion, great was his dismay and astonishment when, on reckoning them, he found that three were most unaccountably missing. Here was more mystery; and, unfortunately, this discovery was made at a time when he had every reason to suspect that Aileen had at length been drawn into the prevalent practices. The fact was, that many secret and guarded movements had been of late

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noticed by him, of which, from motives of deep and sagacious policy, he had determined to take no open cognizance, being resolved to allow Aileen to lull herself into that kind of false security, which is usually produced by indifference or stupidity on the part of the husband.

Here was a matter, however, that could not be overlooked, and accordingly he demanded an explanation; but this in a manner so exceedingly sage and cunning, that we are sure our readers cannot withhold from him the mark of their approbation.

"Aileen," said he, without appearing to labour under any suspicion whatsoever, "you had betther look afther them crathurs o' geese this mornin'; there's three o' them missin'. I can reckon only eight, not countin' the gandher."

"Bad cess to your curosity, Barney, you're as bad as a woman, so you are, countin' the geese! Musha, go to heaven!"

"No, divil a foot," said her husband, starting up in a passion, "an' be the holy vestment, if you don't tell me on the nail what became o' them, I won't lave a goose o' them alive in twenty minutes. An' more than that, take care an' don't—— take care I say—don't exaggrawate me, I tell you!"

"Well, throth, Barney, this is good! afore your own childher too! An' now, if you want to know, I did nothin' wrong wid them, in regard that I knew well enough you'd bring me over the coals about it. Ay did I. You gave me two an' six pence to pay my Aisther dues; an' I met my aunt, an' my sisther an' her bachelor, Charley Cleary, an' I axed them in an' threated them dacently wid your money, an' of coorse I had to sell *one* o' the geese to make it up."

"Then of coorse, too, you ped your dues."

"The divle send you news whether I did or not. I'll tell you what, Barney, sooner than I'd lead such a life, I'd ——"

"You'd what? you'd what? but I'll curb myself. To-

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morrow's market day. Now I tell you out you'll trudge step for step along wid myself; an' be the mortual man, two o' the same geese must go afore you lave the town. At your elbow I'll stay till they're sould; an' every market day till they're gone, a pair o' them must go."

"Why, then, you mane-spirited *pittiouge*, is it to sell geese—arra what'ill you come to at last, you blanket you? Sure if I did wrong, can't you beat me? So you'll stand at my elbow till I sell my geese! Be my sowl if you do I'll bring a blush in your face, if there's such a thing in it, which there's not, or you wouldn't make an ould woman—*a Molshy*—of yourself as you're doin'. Upon my dickens I wondher you didn't sit on the eggs yourself; but, sure, I'll say you did, to-morrow, an' then they'll bring three prices! Saver above, but I'm leadin' a happy life wid you an' your geese! Musha bad luck be from them every day they rise, but they have been a bitther pill to me from the beginnin'. Sure yourself an' them's a common by-word. Can either of us go to mass or market that the neighbours doesn't be axin' wid a grin, 'how is Barney Brady's goose?'"

It would be acting rather unbecoming the dignity of a historian were we to dwell too minutely on the bitter feuds which followed the sale of every goose until the last of the clutch was disposed of. The truth is, that Barney, in spite of all his authority and watchfulness and conscious wisdom to boot, was never able to lay a finger upon a single penny of the proceeds, nor could he with all his acuteness of scent, smell out the purpose to which Aileen applied it. No: we are wrong in this. He did find it out, and as we have said, strongly suspect it too; but he was hitherto able in no instance to detect Aileen so as perfectly to satisfy himself and bring the proof home against her.

A circumstance, however, now occurred which brought the whole dark secrecy of this proceeding to light. Barney, one day, while searching in some corner for a hatchet, which he

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wanted, stumbled upon a smooth round vessel with a handle on one side, a pipe on the other, and a close fitting lid on the top. Cruikshank or Brooke would have enjoyed the grin of malignant triumph which played upon his features, as, with one hand stretched under the bed, he lay curiously feeling and examining the vessel in question. Very fortunately for him Aileen was cutting some greens in the garden for their dinner, and was consequently totally ignorant of the discovery. The opportunity was too good to be lost, and Barney, who, although he knew not the use to which the vessel was applied, having never seen one before, yet suspecting that it was part and parcel of the wicked system which prevailed, resolved, now that the coast was clear, to carry it to those who could determine its use and application. He immediately whipped it out, took a hasty glance, and, hiding it under his big coat, stole off, unperceived by Aileen, to consult the two Maguigans. Here, however, was no chance of solving the mystery, the Maguigans never having, any more than himself, seen to their knowledge any vessel of the kind before. Long and serious was their deliberation respecting the steps necessary to be taken upon this important occasion; one suggesting one thing, another another. At length it occurred to them, that their best plan would be to consult Kate Doorish, an old woman who was considered an infallible authority. Barney, accordingly, once more putting this delfic enigma under his coat, set off to Kate's house, with something like a prophetic assurance of success. In this again he was doomed to be disappointed. Kate, in truth, was the very last person from whom, had he known as much as his wife, he would or ought to have expected information. She it was who had chiefly corrupted the good wives of the village, both by precept and example, and on her head of course did the original sin of the whole neighbourhood lie. Barney found her at home, and took it for granted that the difficulty must now be solved without further trouble.

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"God save you, Kate."

"God save you kindly, Barney. How is Aileen an' the childher?"

"All as tight as tuppence, Kate. What's the news? any births or marriages abroad?"

"Ay is there, as many as ever; an' will be, plase God, to the end o' the chapther, man."

"Why, thin, I believe you're right, Kate. While the sun shines, an' the wind blows, the world will still be goin'; but Kate, betuxt you an' me, is it thrue that there's a dale o' bad work goin' on among ourselves?"

"Faix, I suppose so; you men wor never good."

"Don't lift me till I fall, Kate—I mane among the women. I'm tould there's hardly one of them what she ought to be."

"Why, barrin' the grace o' God, that's thrue; for Barney, where's the man or woman aither that is as they *ought* to be? glory be to God!"

"To tell the truth, Kate, I'm afeard my own wife's not much better than the rest."

"Faith, if she's as good, man, you have no right to complain. Isn't she good enough for *you*, any how. Is it a lady you want? Musha, cock you up, indeed!"

"There's thim eleven geese, they're gone now, and not a farden ever I touched of the price of any one o' them, only two hogs I got to help to buy leather for a pair o' brogues."

"Well!"

"But I say, Kate, it's not well. Now where did it go to?—answer me that. I tell you she's as bad as the Maguigans, an' of the three, worse. I can't keep them asundher, and the lies they tell us is beyant b'lief. An' not only that, but when they get together we're their sport and maygame, an' you know that very well."

"No, nor you don't."

"Don't I? I tell you I *cotch* them."

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"Cotch them! at what? pullin' down churches? eh?"

"Any way I as good as cotch them; an' here's a piece o' their villany," he added, producing the mystery from under his coat. "Now, Kate, I'll give you share of half a pint if you tell me the right name of this consarn."

"Why," replied Kate, "did you never see one o' these before; an' is it possible you don't know the name of it?"

"No; but I suspect."

"An' so you came here to know the name of it, an' what it's for?"

"Divil a thing else brought me."

"An' you expect me to turn informer against the dacent woman to satisfy your curosity! Get out, you mane-spirited blaggard, how dare you come to me on sich a business? It's a salt herrin' you ought to have tied to your tail, an' be turned out before a drag-hunt, you skulkin' vagabone. Begone out o' this!"

Discomfited and grieved he returned home, almost despairing of ever ascertaining the purpose for which the mysterious and strangely-shapen vessel was employed.

Now it so happened that the priest of the parish, Father O'Flaherty, held a station that day in the next townland, and thither did honest Barney repair, that he might have his reverence's opinion upon the vessel which he carried under his coat. He, accordingly, bent his steps in that direction, and arrived just as the priest had concluded the business of the day.

"Well, Barney," said the priest, "I hope there's nothing wrong."

Barney shook his head with a good deal of solemnity, and replied—

"It's hard to say, your reverence; but I'd be glad to have a word or two in private wid you, if it's agreeable."

The priest brought him into the room where he had been confessing, and inquired what was the matter.

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"But first sit down, Barney," said he; "and how is the wife and children?"

"I'm much obliged to you, sir," replied Barney; "but it's not jist convanient to me to sit, in regard of what I'm carryin' —the childhre's all well, sir, thank God and your reverence; an' Aileen too, sir, as far as health is consarned."

"But why don't you sit down, man?"

"The divil a one of me can, sir, as I said; "I've a thing here that I want to ax your reverence's opinion on; for to tell you the truth, sir, I suspect it to be nothing more or less than a piece of the divil's invention."

"Where did you get it?"

"Why, sir, I was gropin' about to-day looking for a hatchet, an' I stumbled on it by accident."

As he spoke, he slowly unfolded the skirts of his cothamore, and produced the "mystery of iniquity" to the priest.

The priest, who was a bit of a humourist in his way, on seeing what Barney carried with such secrecy, laughed heartily and commenced a stave or two of the old song, familiar by the name of—"Oh, Tea-pot, are you there?"

Oh for the muse of old Meonides, or that tenth Lady from Helicon who jogged the poetic elbow of our own Mark Bloxam! Oh for—but this is useless—one line of Virgil will paint honest Barney, on ascertaining from the priest that the utensil he bore about with all the apparent importance and caution of an antiquarian, was after all the damnable realization of his worst terrors, and the confirmation of his unprincipled wife's guilt, an accursed tea-pot:—

"Obstupuit, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit."

Truly his dismay and horror could scarcely be painted; he started as if he had seen a spirit, his fingers spread, his eyebrows were uplifted, and his eyes protruded almost out of

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their sockets; his very hair, as the poet says, stood upright, and speech for nearly a minute was denied him.

But this paroxysm of Barney's, on discovering what the mystic vase actually was, demands a few words of explanation. We believe it is pretty well known to most of our aged readers (if it so happen that any old lady or gentleman will condescend to peruse us), that about half a century ago, or even later, ere civilization had carried many of its questionable advantages so far into the remote recesses of humble life as it does in the present day, there existed among the lower classes a prejudice against tea-drinking, that was absolutely revolting. It is, to be sure, difficult properly to account for this; but the reader may rest assured that so it was. In the time of which we speak, any woman, especially a married one, suspected of "tay-dhrinkin'," was looked upon as a marked sheep, and if detected in the act, she was considered a disgrace to her sex, and her name a reproach to her connexions. Many circumstances went to create this not unwholesome prejudice, and we shall mention a few of them.

It the first place, tea at that time was by no means so cheap a luxury as it is now; and besides, it brought still more luxuries in its train. They could not use tea without sugar; and it was found that a loaf of "white bread" and butter were a decided improvement. This costly indulgence was naturally and justly looked upon as an act of domestic profligacy, altogether unjustifiable on the part of the poor and struggling classes, who must have distressed themselves and wasted their means in striving to procure it. Nor was this all. It was too frequently found that wives and daughters did not scruple to steal, or otherwise improperly make away with the property of their husbands and fathers, rather than live without this fascinating beverage, which had then the zest of novelty to recommend it. Neither did its injurious consequences, in a moral point of view, end here. Wives and daughters have

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been known to entail still deeper disgrace upon their families, in order to obtain it. The sons of half-sirs, and of independent farmers, might have been less successful in their gallantries among the females of their father's tenantry, were it not for the silly weakness which often yielded to temptation in this shape. These facts of themselves were sufficient to create an abhorrence against tea among the male portion of the lower classes, and to render it almost infamy for any woman to be known to drink it. Our catalogue of prejudices, however, does not end even here. It was reported—by the husbands, we presume—that tea was every way unlucky about a house, and that no poor family in which it was drunk was ever known to thrive,—and for this reason, that the devil was worshipped in the country from whence it came, and that it was consequently "*the devil's plant.*" But independently of this, did not they all know the wickedness that took place in the high families, when men and women, married and single, from the lord-lieutenant to the squire, met in the middle of night, and in the pitch dark, to drink, every two of them—that is man and woman—their RAKING POT OF TEA! Sure it was well known that the devil was always present, and made the "tay" himself; and as most of the lords and gentlemen were members of the Hell-fire Club, it stood to reason that the devil and they were all in their glory.

Now, all this came of "tay dhrinking;" and how, then, could it happen but that the old boy must have had a hard grip of any woman that took to it. Our readers, we trust, can now understand not only our friend Barney's horror, on discovering that the vessel he carried about with him was nothing more nor less than an unholy tea-pot, but also the distress, and indignation, and jealous vigilance with which he and the Maguigans kept watch upon the motions of their inoffensive wives. Indeed, much of the simplicity of character which then existed, is now gone; and we have every reason to regret it, although not more

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than the unhappy people themselves. It was truly amusing to witness the harmless but covert warfare which went on between the husbands and wives of a village, who assailed each other as if from masked batteries, whilst a firm and incorruptible *esprit du corps* knit the individuals on each side together—thus joining themselves into a most cunning league, for the purpose of circumventing the opposite party. And in later times, when tea was sanctioned at least once a week—to wit, on Sunday morning—it was highly diverting to witness the manœuvres resorted to by the good wife or her daughters, in order to have a cup of it more frequently. Sometimes they salted the porridge made for breakfast so villanously, that there was nothing for it but the "cup o' tay;" sometimes the schoolmaster was to breakfast with them, and when the strongest and most fragrant was ready drawn and awaiting him, it was discovered that the whole matter was a hoax, got up by the females of the family, that they might secure it to themselves. But alas! those good innocent days are gone, and we fear for ever!—But to return—

"Heaven and earth, your reverence!" exclaimed Barney, when he had recovered himself, "what's to be done? I'm a ruined man, an' my wife's worse."

Now nobody living understood the nature of Barney's grievance better than the priest, to whom, upon the woful subject of tea-drinking, many a sore complaint, heaven knows, had been carried.

"Why, Barney," said he, pretending ignorance, "what is wrong?"

"Wrong! By the mortual man, your reverence—God pardon me for swearin' in your presence—she's at it hard and fast for the last nine months."

"Nine months! how is that? what do you mean?"

"That devil's plant, the tay, sir. Aileen, my wife's to the back bone into it. She an' them two rotten sheep, the Magui-

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gans' wives. Ay are they; an' the truth, the naked truth, is, sir, that they're all roddled wid the same stick—devil a thing but truth I'm tellin' you."

"Tut! you're dreaming, Barney. How could your wife afford to drink tea? Where could she get the money for it? You have none to spare, I believe; and if you had, I don't think you'd allow it to her for such a purpose."

"It ariz all along out of a damnable—heaven forgive me agin for takin' its name afore you, sir—out of a damnable goose I got from an aunt o' mine; and may all the plagues of Aygip light upon her, an' on the dotin' ould goose of a gandher that's along wid her!"

"Why, what has the goose to do with your wife's tea-drinking?"

"Every thing, and be cursed to her—the dirty blackguard fowl made me a laughin'-stock to the neighbours in the beginnin', and now my wife has made me worse. God only knows what she has made me; a tay-dhrinker, your reverence knows, will do any thing."

"But the goose, Barney? I can't connect the goose with your wife's tea-drinking."

"*Thonom an dioual*, sir—the same goose brought us a clackin' of eleven as fine fat birds as ever you tasted in your life; an' confusion to the one of them but she drank in tea, barrin' two shillings she gave me to buy leather for a pair o' brogues, when my heels were on the stones."

"Is it the goose or your wife you're speaking of?"

"My wife, the thief."

"You don't mean that it was she brought you the clackin' of——"

"No, sir," replied Barney with a grin, which he could not suppress; "nor, be me sowl it wasn't the goose drank the tay aither. But what's to be done, your reverence?"

"Is the goose fat now, Barney?"

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Faith, sir, Squire Warnock's a skilleton to her; she'd want an arm chair to be rolled about in."

"Well, Barney, to get out of trouble, send me the goose and gander, and make your mind easy; I'll cure the tea-drinking; or at all events, I'll undertake that your wife won't taste a single cup without your knowing it."

"You shall have them, sir; but faith I say it's a bould undertaking. God grant you may succeed in it—hopin' always that it mayn't be too late, so far as *I'm* consarned; for they say that a tay-dhrinker has no scruples good or bad. Oh murdher! God pity the man that has a tay-dhrinkin' wife, an' undhertakes to rear geese! I'm nothing but a marthyr to them."

"Barney, I'll tell you what you'll do," said the priest. "Take this same tea-pot back to your own house, and leave it, unknown to your wife, exactly in the spot where you got it. After this, keep singing, 'Tea-pot, are you there?' during the remainder of the day; and you may throw out a hint to her that you have lately seen such a thing; then watch her well, and in a day or two let me know how she'll act. Come, now, put it under your tail and be off. I have given you proper instructions."

Barney thanked the priest, rolled it up in the tail of his great-coat as before, and made towards home; but not without a determination first to see and consult with the Maguigans. This, indeed, was a bitter meeting. No sooner had his two neighbours satisfied themselves that it was a *bona fide* tea-pot, than they solemnly pledged themselves, heart and hand, to support Barney in any plan that might enable them to put an end to tea-drinking for ever. They then separated, having as good as sworn an oath that they would mutually sustain and back one another in this severe and opprobrious trial.

It was very fortunate for Barney that Aileen had gone to bring in a pitcher of water for the supper, when he reached home, as by that means he had an opportunity of replacing

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the tea-pot without the possibility of her seeing him. Great, however, was her astonishment, or rather consternation, when on entering the house she heard Barney singing, "O tea-pot, are you there?" in a tone so jolly and full of spirits, that she knew not in what light to consider this unusual inclination to melody—whether as the result of accident or design.

"Barney, dear," said she, with more affection than usual, "where wor you?"

"In several places, Aileen, my honey. I seen many strange sights to-day, Aileen."

"What wor they, Barney, darling? Tell us one o' them."

"Why, I was lookin' about to-day, Aileen, for an article I wanted—a hatchet, it was to mend a gate—and, upon my throth, I found a jinteel tea-pot in any thing but jinteel company. 'O tea-pot, are you there?'" &c., &c., and he gave her very sturdily a second stave of the same melody.

This melodious system of bitter jocularity he continued like a man on the rack for two or three days, during which period he observed that several secret conferences took place between Aileen and the tainted wives of her neighbours, as was evident from her occasional absences, and the rapid expresses that passed from time to time between them. The fact was that the finding of the tea-pot turned out to be a very fortunate discovery, and was attended by no less important results than the breaking up of the tea-drinking confederacy that existed in the village.

We have now solved and explained this great mystery—and like all other mysteries, discovery put an end to it. Aileen made humble and sufficient apologies for having been drawn into the grievous immorality of tea-drinking. As a token that the wickedness was for ever abandoned, the tea-pot was brought out and smashed with all due ceremony. Father O'Flaherty too was induced to issue from the altar such a severe interdict against the forbidden beverage, as altogether suppressed the practice throughout the parish.

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CONDY CULLEN;

OR,

THE EXCISEMAN DEFEATED.

YOUNG Condy Cullen was descended from a long line of private distillers, and of course, exhibited in his own person all the practical wit, sagacity, cunning, and fertility of invention, which the natural genius of the family, sharpened by long experience, had created from generation to generation, as a standing capital to be handed down from father to son. There was scarcely a trick, evasion, plot, scheme, or manœuvre that had ever been resorted to by his ancestors, that Condy had not at his finger ends; and though but a lad of sixteen at the time we present him to the reader, yet be it observed, that he had had his mind even at that age, admirably trained, by four or five years of keen vigorous practice, in all the resources necessary to meet the subtle vigilance, and stealthy circumvention of that prowling animal—a gauger. In fact, Condy's talents did not merely consist of an acquaintance with the hereditary tricks of his family. These, of themselves, would prove but a miserable defence, against the ever-varying ingenuity, with which the progressive skill of the still-hunter masks his approaches, and conducts his designs. On the contrary, every new plan of the gauger must be met and defeated, by a counter-plan equally novel, but with this difference in the character of both, that whereas the exciseman's devices are the result of mature deliberation—Paddy's, from the very nature of the circumstances, must be necessarily extemporaneous and rapid. The hostility between the parties,

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being, as it is, carried on through such varied stratagem on both sides, and characterized by such adroit and able duplicity, by so many quick and unexpected turns of incident—it would be utter fatuity in either, to rely upon obsolete tricks, and stale manœuvres. Their relative position and occupation do not, therefore, merely exhibit a contest between Law and that mountain nymph, Liberty, or between the Excise Board and the Smuggler—it presents a more interesting point for observation, namely, the struggle between mind and mind—between wit and wit—between roguery and knavery.

It might be very amusing to detail from time to time, a few of those keen encounters of practical cunning, which take place between the potheen distiller and his lynx-eyed foe, the gauger. They are curious as throwing light upon the national character of our people, and as evidences of the surprising readiness of wit, fertility of invention, and irresistible humour, which they mix up with almost every actual concern of life, no matter how difficult or critical it may be. Nay, it mostly happens that the character of the peasant in all its fullness, rises in proportion to what he is called upon to encounter, and that the laugh at, or the hoax upon the gauger, keeps pace with the difficulty that is overcome. But now to our short story.

Two men in the garb of gentlemen were riding along a remote by-road, one morning in the month of October, about the year 1827, or 28, I am not certain which. The air was remarkably clear, keen, and bracing; a hoar frost, for the few preceding nights had set in, and then lay upon the fields about them, melting gradually however, as the sun got strength, with the exception of the sides of such hills and vallies as his beams could not reach, until evening chilled their influence too much to absorb the feathery whiteness which covered them. Our equestrians had nearly reached a turn in the way, which we should observe in this place, skirted the brow of a small declivity that lay on the right. In point of fact, it was a

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moderately inclined plane or slope rather than a declivity; but be this as it may, the flat at its foot was studded over with furze bushes, which grew so close and level, that a person might almost imagine it possible to walk upon their surface. On coming within about two hundred and fifty yards of this angle, the horsemen noticed a lad, not more than sixteen, jogging on towards them, with a keg upon his back. The eye of one of them was immediately lit with that vivacious sparkling of habitual sagacity, which marks the practiced gauger among ten thousand. For a single moment he drew up his horse, an action which, however slight in itself, intimated more plainly than he could have wished, the obvious interest which had just been excited in him. Short as was the pause, it betrayed him, for no sooner had the lad noticed it, than he crossed the ditch and disappeared round the angle we have mentioned, and upon the side of the declivity. To gallop to the spot, dismount, cross the ditch also, and pursue him, was only the work of a few minutes.

"We have him," said the gauger, "we have him—one thing is clear, that he cannot escape us."

"Speak for yourself, Stinton," replied his companion—as for me, not being an officer of his Majesty's Excise, I decline taking any part in the pursuit—it is a fair battle, so fight it out between you—I am with you now only through curiosity." He had scarcely concluded, when they heard a voice singing the following lines, in a spirit of that hearty hilarity which betokens a cheerful contempt of care, and an utter absence of all apprehension:

> "Oh! Jemmy, she sez, you are my true lover,
> You are all the riches that I do adore;
> I solemnly swear now, I'll ne'er have anoder,
> My heart it is fixed to never love more."

The music then changed to a joyous whistle, and immediately they were confronted by a lad, dressed in an old red

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coat, patched with grey frieze, who, on seeing them, exhibited in his features a most ingenuous air of natural surprise. He immediately ceased to whistle, and with every mark of respect, putting his hand to his hat, said in a voice, the tones of which spoke of kindness and deference,—

"God save ye, gintlemin."

"I say, my lad," said the gauger, "where is that customer with the keg on his back?—he crossed over there this moment."

"When, where, sir?" said the lad, with a stare of surprise.

"Where? when? why this minute, and in this place."

"And was it a whiskey keg, sir?"

"Sir, I am not here to be examined by you," replied Stinton, "confound me if the conniving young rascal is not sticking me into a cross-examination already—I say, red-coat, where is the boy with the keg?"

"As for a boy, I did see a boy, sir; but the never a keg he had—hadn't he a grey frieze coat, sir?"

"He had."

"And wasn't it a dauny bit short about the skirts, plase your honour?"

"Again he's at me. Sirra, unless you tell me where he is in half a second, I shall lay my whip to your shoulders!"

"The sorra a keg I seen, then, sir—the last keg I seen was ——"

"Did you see a boy without the keg, answering to the description I gave you?"

"You gave no description of it, sir—but even if you did—when I didn't see it, how could I tell your honour any thing about it?"

"Where is the fellow, you villain," exclaimed the gauger, in a fury—where is he gone to? You admit you saw him; as for the keg, it cannot be far from us—but where is he?"

"Dad I saw a boy wid a short frieze coat upon him, crassing

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the road there below, and runnin' down the other side of that ditch."

This was too palpable a lie to stand the test even of a glance at the ditch in question; which was nothing more than a slight mound that ran down a long lea field, on which there was not even the appearance of a shrub.

The gauger looked at his companion—then turning to the boy—"Come, come, my lad," said he, "you know that lie is rather cool. Don't you feel in your soul that a rat could not have gone in that direction, without our seeing it?"

"Bedad an' I saw him," returned the lad, "wid a grey coat upon him, that was a little too short in the tail—it's better than half an hour agone."

"The boy I speak of, you must have met," said Stinton; "it's not five minutes—no, not more than three, since he came inside the field?"

"That my feet may grow to the ground then if I seen a boy, in or about this place, widin that time, barrin' myself."

The gauger eyed him closely for a short space, and pulling out half-a-crown, said—"Harkee, my lad, a word with you in private."

The fact is, that during the latter part of this dialogue, the worthy exciseman observed the cautious distance at which the boy kept himself from the grasp of him and his companion. A suspicion consequently began to dawn upon him, that in defiance of appearances, the lad himself might be the actual smuggler. On re-considering the matter, this suspicion almost amounted to certainty; the time was too short to permit even the most ingenious cheat to render himself and his keg invisible in a manner so utterly unaccountable. On the other hand, when he reflected on the open, artless character of the boy's song; the capricious change to a light-hearted whistle, the surprise so naturally, and the respect so deferentially expressed, joined to the dissimilarity of dress, he was confounded

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again, and scarcely knew on which side to determine. Even the lad's reluctance to approach him might proceed from fear of the whip. He felt resolved, however, to ascertain this point, and with the view of getting the lad into his hands, he showed him half-a-crown, and addressed him as already stated.

The lad, on seeing the money, appeared to be instantly caught by it, and approached him, as if it had been a bait he could not resist; a circumstance which again staggered the gauger. In a moment, however, he seized him.

"Come, now," said he, unbuttoning his coat, "you will oblige me by stripping?"

"And why so?" said the lad, with a face which might have furnished a painter or sculptor with a perfect notion of curiosity, perplexity, and wonder.

"Why so?" replied Stinton—"we shall see—we shall soon see."

"Surely you don't think I've hid the keg about me," said the other, his features now relaxing into such an appearance of utter simplicity, as would have certainly made any other man but a gauger give up the examination as hopeless, and exonerate the boy from any participation whatsoever in the transaction.

"No, no," replied the gauger, "by no means, you young rascal. See here, Cartwright," he continued, addressing his companion—"the keg, my precious;" again turning to the lad—"Oh! no, no, it would be cruel to suspect you of any thing but the purest of simplicity."

"Look here, Cartwright," having stripped the boy of his coat and turned it inside out, "there's a coat—there's thrift—there's economy for you—Come, sir, tuck on, tuck on instantly; here, I shall assist you—up with your arms—straighten your neck; it will be both straightened and stretched yet, my cherub. What think you now, Cartwright? Did you ever see a metamorphosis in your life so quick, complete, and unexpected?"

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His companion was certainly astonished in no small degree, on seeing the red coat, when turned, become a comfortable grey frieze; one precisely such as he who bore the keg had on. Nay, after surveying his person and dress a second time, he instantly recognised him as the same.

The only interest, we should observe, which this gentleman had in the transaction, arose from the mere gratification which a keen observer of character, gifted with a strong relish for humour, might be supposed to feel. The gauger, in sifting the matter, and scenting the trail of the keg, was now in his glory, and certainly when met by so able an opponent as our friend Condy, for it was indeed himself, furnished a very rich treat to his friend.

"Now," he continued, addressing the boy again—"lose not a moment in letting us know where you've hid the keg."

"The sorra bit of it I hid—it fell aff o' me, an' I lost it; sure I'm lookin' afther it myself, so I am;" and he moved over while speaking, as if pretending to search for it in a thin hedge, which could by no means conceal it.

"Cartwright," said the gauger, "did you ever see any thing so perfect as this, so ripe a rascal—you don't understand him now. Here, you simpleton; harkee, sirra, there must be no playing the lapwing with me; back here to the same point. We may lay it down as a sure thing that whatever direction he takes from this spot is the wrong one; so back here, you, sir, till we survey the premises about us for your traces.

The boy walked sheepishly back, and appeared to look about him for the keg, with a kind of earnest stupidity, which was altogether inimitable.

"I say, my boy," asked Stinton ironically, "don't you look rather foolish now? can you tell your right hand from your left?"

"I can," replied Condy, holding up his left, "there's my right hand."

"And what do you call the other?" said Cartwright.

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"My left, bedad, any how, an' that's true enough."

Both gentlemen laughed heartily.

"But it's carrying the thing a little *too far*," said the gauger: "in the meantime let us hear how you prove it?"

"Aisy enough, sir," replied Condy, "bekase I am left handed—this," holding up the left, "is the right hand to me, whatever you may say to the conthrary."

Condy's countenance expanded, after he had spoken, into a grin so broad and full of grotesque sarcasm, that Stinton and his companion both found their faces, in spite of them, get rather blank under its influences.

"What the deuce!" exclaimed the gauger, "are we to be here all day? Come, sir, bring us at once to the keg."

He was here interrupted by a laugh from Cartwright, so vociferous, long, and hearty, that he looked at him with amazement—"Hey, dey," he exclaimed, "what's the matter, what's the matter; what new joke is this?"

For some minutes, however, he could not get a word from the other, whose laughter appeared as if never to end; he walked to and fro in absolute convulsions, bending his body and clapping his hands together, with a vehemence quite unintelligible.

"What is it, man?" said the other, "confound you, what is it?"

"Oh!" replied Cartwright, "I am sick, perfectly feeble."

"You have it to yourself at all events," observed Stinton.

"And shall keep it to myself," said Cartwright, "for if your sagacity is over-reached, you must be contented to sit down under defeat. I won't interfere."

Now, in this contest between the gauger and Condy, even so slight a thing as one glance of an eye by the latter, might have given a proper cue to an opponent so sharp as Stinton. Condy, during the whole dialogue, consequently preserved the most vague and undefinable visage imaginable, except in the

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matter of his distinction between right and left; and Stinton, who watched his eye with the shrewdest vigilance, could make nothing of it. Not so was it between him and Cartwright; for during the closing paroxysms of his mirth, Stinton caught his eye fixed upon a certain mark barely visible upon the hoar frost, which mark extended down to the furze bushes that grew at the foot of the slope where they then stood.

As a stanch old hound lays his nose to the trail of a hare or fox, so did the gauger pursue the trace of the keg down the little hill; for the fact was, that Condy, having no other resource, trundled it off towards the furze, into which it settled perfectly to his satisfaction; and with all the quickness of youth and practice, instantly turned his coat, which had been made purposely for such rencounters. This accomplished, he had barely time to advance a few yards round the angle of the hedge, and changing his whole manner, as well as his appearance, acquitted himself as the reader has already seen. That he could have carried the keg down to the cover, then conceal it, and return to the spot where they met him, was utterly beyond the reach of human exertion, so that in point of fact they never could have suspected that the whiskey lay in such a place.

The triumph of the gauger was now complete, and a complacent sense of his own sagacity sat visibly on his features. Condy's face, on the other hand, became considerably lengthened, and appeared quite as rueful and mortified as the other's was joyous and confident.

"Who's sharpest now, my knowing one?" said he, "who is the laugh against, as matters stand between us?"

"The sorra give you good of it," said Condy, sulkily.

"What is your name?" inquired Stinton.

"Barney Keerigan's my name," replied the other indigdantly; "and I'm not ashamed of it—nor afeard to tell it to you or any man."

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"What, of the Keerigans of Killoghan?"

"Ay jist, of the Keerigans of Killoghan."

"I know the family," said Stinton, "they are decent *in their way*—but come, my lad, don't lose your temper, and answer me another question. Where were you bringing this whiskey?"

"To a betther man than ever stud in your shoes," replied Condy, in a tone of absolute defiance—"to a gintleman any way," with a peculiar emphasis on the word gintleman.

"But what's his name?"

"Mr. Stinton's his name—gauger Stinton."

The shrewd exciseman stood and fixed his keen eye on Condy for upwards of a minute, with a glance of such piercing scrutiny as scarcely any consciousness of imposture could withstand.

Condy, on the other hand, stood and eyed him with an open, unshrinking, yet angry glance; never winced, but appeared by the detection of his keg, to have altogether forgotten the line of cunning policy he had previously adopted, in a mortification which had predominated over duplicity and art.

He is now speaking truth, thought the gauger; he has lost his temper, and is completely off his guard.

"Well, my lad," he continued, "that is very good so far, but who sent the keg to Stinton?"

"Do you think," said Condy, with a look of strong contempt at the gauger, for deeming him so utterly silly as to tell him, "Do you think that you can make me turn informer? There's none of *that* blood in me, thank goodness."

"Do you know Stinton?"

"How could I know the man I never seen?" replied Condy, still out of temper; "but one thing I don't know, gintlemen, and that is, whether you have any right to take my whiskey or not?"

"As to that, my good lad, make your mind easy—I'm Stinton."

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'You, sir!" said Condy, with well-feigned surprise.'

"Yes," replied the other, "I'm the very man you were bringing the keg to. And now I'll tell you what you must do for me; proceed to my house with as little delay as possible; ask to see my daughter—ask for Miss Stinton—take this key and desire her to have the keg put into the cellar; she'll know the key, and let it also be as a token, that she is to give you your breakfast; say I desired that keg to be placed to the right of the five-gallon one I seized on Thursday last, that stands on a little stillion under my blunderbuss."

"Of coorse, said Condy, who appeared to have misgivings on the matter, "I suppose I must, but somehow—"

"Why, sirrah, what do you grumble now for?"

Condy still eyed him with suspicion—"And, sir," said he, after having once more mounted the keg, "am I to get nothing for sich a weary trudge as I had wid it, but my breakfast?"

"Here," said Stinton, throwing him half-a-crown, "take that along with it, and now be off—or stop.—Cartwright, will you dine with me to-day, and let us broach the keg? I'll guarantee its excellence, for this is not the first I have got from the same quarter—that's *entre nous*."

"With all my heart," replied Cartwright, "upon the terms you say, that of the broach."

"Then, my lad," said Stinton, "say to my daughter, that a friend, perhaps a friend or two, will dine with me to-day—that is enough."

They then mounted their horses and were proceeding as before, when Cartwright addressed the gauger as follows:—

"Do you not put this lad, Stinton, in a capacity to overreach you yet?"

"No," replied the other, "the young rascal spoke the truth after the discovery of the keg, for he lost his temper, and was no longer cool."

"For my part, hang me if I'd trust him."

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"I should scruple to do so myself," replied the gauger, "but, as I said, these Keerigans—notorious illicit fellows, by the way—send me a keg or two every year, and almost always about this very time. Besides I read him to the heart and he never winced. Yes, decidedly, the whiskey was for me; of that I have no doubt whatsoever."

"I most positively would not trust him."

"Not that perhaps I ought," said Stinton, "on second thought, to place such confidence in a lad who acted so adroitly in the beginning. Let us call him back, and re-examine him at all events."

Now Condy had, during this conversation, been discussing the very same point with himself.

"Bad cess for ever attend you, Stinton agra," he exclaimed, "for there's surely something *over you*—a lucky shot from behind a hedge, or a break-neck fall down a cliff, or something of that kind. If the ould boy hadn't his croubs hard and fast in you, you wouldn't let me walk away wid the whiskey, any how. Bedad it's well I thought o' the Keerigans; for sure enough I did hear Barney say, that he was to send a keg in to him this week, some day—and he didn't think I knew him aither—Faix it's many a long day since I knew the sharp *puss* of him, wid an eye like a hawk. But what if they folly me, and do up all? Any way, I'll prevint them from having suspicion on me, before I go a toe farther, the ugly rips."

He instantly wheeled about a moment, or two before Stinton and Cartwright had done the same, for the purpose of sifting him still more thoroughly—so that they found him meeting them.

"Gintlemen," said he, "how do I know that aither of yous is Mr. Stinton, or that the house you directed me to is his? I know that if the whiskey doesn't go to him, I may lave the counthry!"

"You are either a deeper rogue, or a more stupid fool than I

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took you to be," observed Stinton—"but what security can you give us, that you will leave the keg safely at its destination?"

"If I thought you were Mr. Stinton, I'd be very glad to lave you the whiskey where it is, and even do widout my breakfast—Gintlemen, tell me thruth, bekase I'd only be murdhered out of the face."

"Why, you idiot," said the gauger, losing his temper and suspicions both together, "can't you go to the town and inquire where Mr. Stinton lives?"

"Bedad thin, thrue enough, I never thought of that at all at all, but I beg your pardon, gintlemen, an' I hope you won't be angry wid me, in regard that it's kilt and quartered I'd be if I let myself be made a fool of by any body."

"Do what I desire you," said the exciseman; "inquire for Mr. Stinton's house, and you may be sure the whiskey will reach him."

"Thank you, sir. Bedad I might have thought of that myself."

This last clause, which was spoken in a soliloquy, would have deceived a saint himself.

"Now," said Stinton, after they had recommenced their journey, "are you satisfied?"

"I am at length," said Cartwright; "if his intentions had been dishonest, instead of returning to make himself certain against being deceived, he would have made the best of his way from us—a rogue never wantonly puts himself in the way of danger or detection."

That evening, about five o'clock, Stinton, Cartwright, and two others arrived at the house of the worthy gauger, to partake of his good cheer. A cold frosty evening gave a peculiar zest to the comfort of a warm room, a blazing fire, and a good dinner. No sooner were the viands discussed, the cloth removed, and the glasses ready, than their generous host

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desired his daughter to assist the servant in broaching the redoubtable keg.

"That keg, my dear," he proceeded, "which the country lad, who brought the key of the cellar, left here to-day."

"A keg!" repeated the daughter, with surprise.

"Yes, Maggy, my love, a keg; I said so, I think."

"But, papa, there came no keg here to-day!"

The gauger and Cartwright both groaned in unison.

"No keg!" said the gauger.

"No keg!" echoed Cartwright.

"No keg, indeed," re-echoed Miss Stinton—"but there came a country boy with the key of the cellar, as a token that he was to get the five gallon—"

"Oh!" groaned the gauger, "I'm knocked up, outwitted,—oh!"

"Bought and sold," added Cartwright.

"Go on," said the gauger, "I must hear it out?"

"As a token," proceeded Miss Stinton, "that he was to get the five gallon keg on the little stillion, under the blunderbuss, for Captain Dalton."

"And he got it?"

"Yes, sir, he got it; for I took the key as a sufficient token."

"But, Maggy—hell and fury, hear me, child—surely he brought a keg here, and left it; and of course it's in the cellar?"

"No, indeed, papa, he brought no keg here; but he did bring the five gallon one that *was* in the cellar away with him."

"Stinton," said Cartwright, "send round the bottle."

"The rascal," ejaculated the gauger, "we shall drink his health."

And on relating the circumstances, the company drank the sheepish lad's health, that bought and sold the gauger.

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A RECORD OF THE HEART;

OR,

THE PARENTS' TRIAL.

It may appear to many persons, that the life and death of a harmless idiot boy can present very few facts or incidents of sufficient importance to interest readers in general, or to touch those cords which are apt to shrink from, rather than respond to, any sympathy with such a subject. I doubt, however, whether there is a single object in the wide dominions of nature, that is not bound by some tie, latent or obvious, to that incomprehensible origin of our happiness and misery, the human heart. So manifold are its changes and transitions, and so endless the variety of the situations in which it is placed, that it becomes impossible for the most successful searcher into its mysteries, to discover the inconceivable gradations of the impulses that guide it, the secret power of its associations, or the new states of feeling into which the infinite shiftings of external circumstances, added to its unconscious experience during the progress of general life, may throw it. Would Trenck, when bouyant with the hopes that such a brilliant outset in life promised him, have deemed it possible that any variety of fortune, however strange, could have taught him the sympathy which may subsist between a man and a mouse? No; and for my part I candidly admit, that I would look with contempt upon the individual who would avow himself incapable of entertaining sympathy with any human being no matter how degraded. A mortal being

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absolutely vicious or virtuous has never lived, nor can there be found a character which does not exhibit something either to avoid or imitate, and consequently to sympathize with.—*Homo sum, et nihil humani a me alienum puto*—is an axiom as full of truth, as it is of affection, and reflects endless honour upon the noble-minded heathen, whose heart conceived a sentiment almost worthy of the humane beauty of Christianity.

Alexander Wilson was a young man of very respectable character, in the upper ranks of middle life; that is to say, he filled that most important position in society, which lies between the wealthy farmer and the unpretending country gentleman. He kept his car, and drove his gig, but at the same time managed his own property, superintended his workmen, and for the most part bought and sold his own cattle. He was possessed of a small fee-simple estate, worth better that three hundred a year; but besides this he farmed four hundred acres of excellent land, to which was attached a considerable tract of mountain; the latter at nearly a nominal rent. Wilson had been designed for the church, and received a collegiate education, but as his disposition became gradually inclined towards the active pursuits and healthy amusements of a country life, he ultimately gave up all pretensions to that profession, took the farm I have alluded to, and in a short time had the reputation of being a most promising and intelligent agriculturist.

Wilson, when about to determine his pursuit in life, was eminently handsome, and certainly became a great favourite in the drawing-room. On his return from college, his manners were gentlemanly, and his complexion possessed of that delicacy which study and protection from the elements both bestowed upon it; thereby creating that character which young ladies who incessantly read novels, understand by the term "sentimental." In a short time, however, the paleness of sentiment and study, which after all was little else than the

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absence of sun and wind, began to disappear, and his features to assume the firm and manly tone of health and exercise. His relish for the sports of the field was sufficiently keen for all the purposes of rational amusement, without bringing him to the pitiable condition of those who suffer them to become the business of life, and who appear to consider themselves created for no other purpose than, as Fielding humourously parodied it—*Feras consumere nati.* Many of the fair sentimentalists—a class who look upon health to be incompatible with their idea of beauty—now began to think that he was getting quite coarse and vulgar, and were frequently heard to exclaim, "Dear me, what a pity it is that so interesting a young man as Wilson should allow himself to sink down into the rustic pursuits of a mere farmer!"

And unquestionably it was true, that a very remarkable change did certainly take place, not only in his appearance and person, as we have said, but also in his general manners and deportment. His dress, though respectable and well made, was not so decidedly fashionable, nor of such exquisite materials as before; his demeanour and conversation were more frank and open, and a great deal less ambitious of polish and sentiment, than while he had the church in view. He no longer spoke to the other sex in that small voice of insinuating softness, which they relish so much in young men of decided piety. He had now ceased to be that sweet undertoned appendage of the drawing-room, ycleped a divinity student, and, as a natural consequence, he had also ceased to make himself remarkable, by discussing no other topic than a religious one, or to look upon the secular tendency of general conversation in a mixed company, as a proof how much vital godliness was disappearing from the world. Instead of never permitting the muscles of his face to relax beyond such a serious smile as was sufficient to show a well-brushed set of teeth and a horror of profane mirth, he could now laugh out from the heart like a

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man. He had also given up the practice of discussing with pious old ladies, and their daughters or nieces, the comparative merits of the most popular preachers, and of charitably recommending his own sect to the utter condemnation of all others. The white hand, the still whiter cambric handkerchief, and the gilt Bible, well dog-eared, so as to denote the faithful text-hunter, were no longer paraded with that grave air of sincerity, which though often real, is on the other hand too frequently assumed. Under any circumstances, this sober ostentation, of "seriousness" in mixed company is, to say the least of it, offensive to good taste, as well as inimical to the interests of true religion, which never hangs out a black flag to tell the world where she is to be found, as well as the colours she is known by.

At all events, the change that I have mentioned in Wilson, was quite obvious to all who had known him. He was now a stout, fine-looking young man, with an open and handsome countenance, tinged into the brown hues of robust health, by activity and employment. He also contracted what I may term a courteous bluntness of manner, by which it was easy to see how readily the wealthy farmer and the man of education may meet in the same person, and form a model of gentlemanly ease and independence, which it would be well to see more frequently imitated by the class to which he belonged.

It was very natural, under these circumstances, that a young man at Wilson's period of life, should begin to feel the inconvenience of not having some person to manage the domestic arrangements of his house, and to bestow that happiness, which can never be participated in by a solitary heart. Added to this, the natural ardour of an affectionate disposition determined him, with as little delay as possible, to marry. Nor was it difficult for a highly educated, handsome young fellow, as he was, and very independent besides in his circumstances, to select a suitable companion from among classes even higher

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than that in which he moved. With equal good sense and good feeling, he paid his addresses in a quarter where both prudence and affection justified his choice. Jane Lesmond was a lovely and accomplished girl, somewhat diffident in her manner, as almost every girl possessing tender and profound feeling is. She was not one of those who parade their accomplishments before society, or who take delight in obtruding them upon the attention of both strangers and friends, until their exhibition becomes not merely common-place, but painful. On the contrary, she might be passed by, as one of those who appear to be born only to fill a place in the crowd, were it not that her beauty was by no means of that description which could be overlooked. To a discriminating eye her silence and modesty, instead of being the result of insipidity, were soon discovered to proceed from observation and reflection. Indeed the slightest opportunity of conversation disclosed the reluctant manifestations of a mind far beyond the common order, and a taste equally cultivated and just. She was the only daughter but not the only child, of a Captain Lesmond, who, after a long and not undistinguished life, had retired on full pay and an honourable pension. Some reluctance was certainly manifested by himself and his family against the proposed alliance, but Wilson's manners, good sense, and circumstances, were really so unobjectionable, that it was deemed more advisable to unite them, than to sacrifice Miss Lesmond's happiness to that parade and wealth which could neither purchase nor restore it.

Wilson's union with her was indeed a happy one. The residence to which he brought her, was every way suitable both to their taste and education. It was situated on the brow of a small hill, which swept easily down to a very sweet lake, that lay a few hundred perches below it, and whose green smooth margin contrasted beautifully with the summer sheen of its waters. Behind it rose a semicircular sweep of fine old

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timber, tenanted by a rookery, and in every direction the eye was gratified by a country, rich in cultivation and luxuriant scenery. About a quarter of a mile to the left, from among the beeches in which it was embosomed, rose the tapering spire of the parish church, and a little to the right of that, could be seen, through a natural vista in the trees, the white and modest glebe-house of the clergyman. Directly opposite, a rustic bridge, quite in character with the scenery, spanned a quiet stream, whose waters glistened as the light of the sun fell upon them from different quarters of the heavens. Altogether it would be difficult to find a summer landscape, on which lay a spirit of greater tranquillity and beauty.

In this sweet spot, with all of rational enjoyment which life can afford to persons of regulated desires, Wilson and his wife passed for a few years a calm and serene existence. Three girls had already blessed their union, and as the children were beautiful, it is almost unnecessary to say, that their fond parents absolutely idolized them. Now, however, commenced that secret yearning of the heart, which under such circumstances is naturally felt for the absence of a son. Their attachment to each other was in no degree diminished, but on the contrary, softened into a spirit of greater tenderness, by the three beautiful pledges of their love. Notwithstanding all this, their affection, tender as it unquestionably was, gradually became overshadowed by a latent melancholy, which each endeavoured to conceal from the other. Many a secret prayer did they offer up—uttered too in a spirit of pious timidity, that shrank back at the idea of dictating to the Almighty—that if it were consonant to his divine will, their most anxious wishes might be gratified by the birth of a male child. In this beautiful hope of a parent's heart did they both live, until the eve of a fourth still quickened their expectations into an anxiety that became actually painful. It passed, and another daughter was welcomed to their heart with an affec-

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tion, which for the first time was absorbed in a stronger feeling of disappointment and regret.

It soon became evident that they were not happy, and that, however blameless their lives, resignation to the will of God in this matter was not among their virtues. They secretly repined, but, as yet, did not venture openly to murmur against the hand that withheld the earnestly besought blessing. A perceptible chill too somewhat cooled that exquisite spirit of endearment, which up to this period characterized their affections. They felt uneasy, restless, discontented, and if, for a moment, a contemplation of the good bestowed upon them, unconsciously lit up their hearts into momentary gratitude and happiness, the quick memory of their want startled them back into anxiety and gloom.

A fifth event again approached—passed—and added another unwelcome innocent to the number of their girls. Its mother wept, and the father, whose naturally fine understanding had become so subservient to the weakness of his heart, as to fall into a superstitious belief in dreams—which but resemble the wishes that create them—experienced, upon this last occasion, such a mortifying revulsion of feeling, that he actually refused to kiss his babe, nor could he for some days be prevailed upon to see either its mother or itself. His good sense, however, and the impulses of a heart naturally generous and compassionate, soon occasioned him to feel ashamed of thus visiting upon his helpless infant and innocent wife a displeasure which was both unmanly and impious. He took them back, however, rather to his pity than his affection; for his heart began to lose the power of loving with its wonted ardour, and to feel a general disrelish and a growing apathy towards every thing about him that had once been dear to it. From this period his mind began to darken; his principles became unfixed, and the providence of God no longer shone before him in its visible beauty and order. In short, Wilson was a complete

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illustration of a truth, which has not been sufficiently observed, viz. that our feelings in many circumstances and positions of life modify, or altogether change our principles, much more than the world, or we ourselves are apt to imagine. His mind at once dissatisfied and enfeebled, was now incapable of seeing the moral relations that subsist between God and man, except partially or imperfectly; for indeed his growing prejudices discoloured every object which he looked on or examined. The result unhappily was, that ere properly aware of it, Wilson found himself the slave of doubt and scepticism: for true it is, that the power of the judgment soon becomes clouded by the errors of the heart.

For some months he remained in this painful and gloomy state, seeking throughout all nature, both physical and moral, for arguments to justify the very opinions which constituted his own unhappiness; and he soon found, that, with characteristic consistency, every new objection against truth, whilst it flattered the pride of his intellect, disturbed his soul with an impatient sense of his own condition, as well as of the general disorder which he thought marked the great mass of human opinions; so that whilst he advanced in his new doctrines, he found that *his* system, instead of soothing his mind into peace and comfort, was only another name for distress and misery. This often induced him to say, that he thought it better to believe a wholesome error, than to fix his faith upon one of those philosophical doctrines, which relax the morals, whilst they raise the mind into a vain and empty pride in its own powers.

To such a fluctuating and unsettled state of thinking and feeling was Wilson reduced, when his wife had the unspeakable transport of presenting him with a son.

Few men can say what they are, and still fewer what they will be.—Wilson argued narrowly; and the consequence was, that substituting feeling for reason, he adopted scepticism,

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not because it was truth, but because he had no son. There are thousands who reason on the subject of religion in this way, and who, when the feelings upon which their opinions have been formed, pass away, or happen to be changed by some event which fills the heart with what it wished for, immediately fall back into truth—less from conviction than from a complacent impression of gratitude, and are heneforth excellent christians merely in compliment to the goodness of Providence.

Be this, however, as it may, the birth of a son wrought an instantaneous, and we might say a remorseful, change in Wilson. To him, whose moral conduct had never been depraved by his opinions, nothing remained but to repudiate his speculations. He looked upon the face of his infant son, as an index of truth, a vindication of God's providence in the distribution of good and evil; but above all things, as a living argument against the rashness of man, in drawing general inferences from particular states of feeling. It is true, that had not his mind lost much of its force, he might have perceived that this mode of reasoning himself back into truth, was very much akin to that by which he had reasoned himself out of it. As few, however, hold their principles from pure reason, man cannot, without much presumption, sit in judgment upon his fellow-creatures, as if he himself were free from the same weakness. It is enough to say, that on the birth of his son Wilson repented his errors, and deeply regretted the day that he ever dared to murmur against Providence, or to question those truths, which, like the stars of heaven, are visible by their own light.

To him and his wife it was truly an event fraught with inexpressible happiness. Their affection now revived into all its original tenderness and warmth. The babe, which was called Alexander after its father—for Mrs. Wilson would allow it no other name—became from the moment of its birth the idol of its parents and its sisters, the theme of every little

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tongue, and the topic of incessant admiration and delight with young and old in the family. Whether this inordinate love of its parents was right or wrong, it is not for us to say; it is sufficient to inform our readers that every day increased it to such a degree, that they had already become the ridicule of all those who had an opportunity of witnessing their extraordinary and unprecedented attachment; an attachment, which resembled rather the irrational impulses of instinct, than the chastened, but elevated affection of religion and reason.

A change of new delight, however, soon came over their spirits in the birth of another son. Wilson's happiness absolutely became quite tumultuous, indeed so much so, that both himself and his wife, who, after all, were naturally disposed to be contented, acknowledged they had nothing now to wish for. Between the birth of their two sons there elapsed only the space of twenty months; so that to their delighted parents they promised to grow up like twins, or, as has been often said, and from its beauty may be often said again, like two cherries upon the same stalk. Their hearts, however, felt that a charm lay upon their first-born, which, in consequence of what they had suffered, gave to their love for him a tenderness that no language could express. He was also his father's name-sake and his image, and none of our readers who are parents, need be told how slight are the circumstances which occasion the affections to incline to one child, even where both or all are much beloved. There never was a family born, in which there has not been a favourite; nay, the very animals are known to single out a particular object of affection among their young: and, although it is injurious to allow this unaccountable predilection to be seen, yet, when we feel that it exists by some mysterious principle of nature, we can do nothing more than regulate it in such a manner as becomes those who know that, however it may exist, it is recognized neither by reason or justice.

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In this case the over-fond parents were no exception to the existence of such a feeling towards the *first* son. Not, heaven knows, that the other was either neglected or unbeloved; for dearly was he cherished by both. The favouritism, however, was so evident, that their other children, as well as the servants, have been often known to play upon it in a manner, which any one not totally infatuated might have easily seen through. The parents themselves of course were not sensible of this, nor of the ridiculous exhibitions of weakness which the folly of their conduct presented to others. The principal burden of their conversation, ere a year had closed on little Alick, was the number of perfections which already began to bud in him. Many a time have they talked themselves asleep whilst indulging in all those happy hopes and prophecies, to which the parents' heart loves to turn, whilst looking into the darkness of the future for the fate of their offspring. They would send him into the army—for his mother warranted he would be brave like grand-papa—his father saw, as indeed any body might, by his expansive forehead, that he would possess genius. Or what if he entered the church? who knew but he might become a bishop? Here his mamma kissed his lordship, and then papa should have a kiss too. But there was the army, where he might rise to be a general? Here the little general was kissed again with as much enthusiasm as if an oracle had foretold it. "But," said his father, "what would you think of the law, my darling? You would not be sorry to see him a judge, would you?" To the mother again this new point was transport—her eyes sparkled, and once more was the little judge devoured with kisses by the fond but weak parents.

When the child had reached his second year, his father observed that sometimes for a moment the serene brow of his mother would become shaded, as she contemplated him. This, where he knew the fullness of her happiness to be equal to his

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own, surprised him considerably, and he could only account for it by supposing that it was one of those pauses of the heart, as it were, which are occasioned by the excessive outpouring of a mother's love, rendering it necessary for nature itself to demand, as it were, a moment of rest to revive its moral energies. Sometimes he thought that it might be one of those gloomy anticipations, which, in spite of hope and love, will intrude themselves on the parent's imagination in a thousand shapes, and which are anxious in proportion to the force and fervour of affection. Having thus satisfied himself by attributing what he had observed to causes which we must admit were very natural, he felt disposed to pay very little attention to them, especially as his wife in conversation made no allusion whatsoever to her feelings. Week, however, after week, only appeared to increase her discomfort, and to lengthen those unaccountable pauses in her happiness. Sometimes he observed her to get deadly pale after a long and earnest contemplation of her child, and he remarked also that whatever the source of this occasional melancholy might be, she felt extremely anxious to conceal it from *him*. Of course, as the child was clearly the object of this secret solicitude, her silence as to its origin only increased his anxiety to know it,—and one day as she pressed it to her heart, and burst into a fit of grief, which even his presence could not restrain, he ventured to inquire why she wept—"Do not ask me," said she, "indeed I scarcely know. I think—I am sure—that my anxiety is groundless. At all events do not, at least for some time longer, press me upon it. You know, my dear Alick, that there are a thousand matters to disturb a mother's heart, which will not occur to any one else."

"But you appear, Jane, to be unhappy."

"No, no, how can I, having him—but say you will not press me—for some time at least."

"Certainly not, my dear; at the same time you must admit

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that I cannot but participate in your anxiety, whatever it may proceed from."

"A little time, I trust, will wholly remove it—and then, the moment I find myself mistaken, I will let you know what it was that occasioned me to feel as I do."

Thus ended the conversation; not at all to the satisfaction of Wilson, who now felt doubly anxious to solve the mystery of her grief. That the child was in some degree, if not solely the cause of it, he had little doubt, and for this purpose he resolved to try, by observing it closely, whether he could not ascertain the cause of her distress.

Two or three months now elapsed, during which Wilson from time to time felt that his own spirit was beginning to experience intervals of darkness, even deeper than those which obscured the joy of the mother. Neither, however, at this period had the slightest anticipation of the terrible discovery which the progress of another year was to make. He now resolved to have a communication with his wife upon the subject; at the same time he felt peculiar difficulty in introducing it, in consequence of not knowing exactly in what language to express the novel and unintelligible sensations which depressed him so much.

"Jane, my love," said he, one evening as they sat alone, "I feel that there is something about our darling child which I cannot understand."

His wife immediately clasped the infant to her breast, whilst a torrent of tears fell down her cheeks—"my child, my child," she sobbed, "*from the moment of his birth he has never smiled upon his mother!* And oh! Alick, Alick, why is this so?"

The husband paused, his lip quivered, and a paleness like that of death overspread his temples.

"It is true," said he, "nor on me, his father; he knows us not."

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He rose, wrung his hands, and walked in deep distress about the room.

"What can be the cause of it?" inquired the mother, whilst her streaming eyes were tenderly fixed upon the child.

"I know not," replied her husband, "yet how frequently have we seen him laugh."

"Yes," she returned, "but it always appeared to be at some inward thought, as it were, of his own—his eye is clear and mild enough, but I have never met the expression in it that recognised *me*."

"As yet he has recognised nobody," replied the father, "and perhaps after all we attach more to the circumstance than we ought. The intellect of some children is of slow development; indeed this has been the case with many who have become the most brilliant ornaments of society afterwards."

How easy it is to give hope, or to receive comfort, where affection is sanguine, for the heart is ever willing to believe in what it wishes. The mother, as she surveyed the baby, appeared to be much relieved by this, and Wilson himself drew consolation from what he had said.

"You will see," he added, "that in a little time the light of individual love will begin to beam from these sweet blue eyes of his. Indeed I entertain perhaps greater hopes from him than if he knew us. It is quite clear that he is not a common child, and believe me, if God Almighty spares him, the event will prove it—otherwise I have little penetration."

He then took the sweet and serenely passive boy in his arms, and exclaimed, whilst the mingled fire of hope and affection flashed from his eyes—

"*Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem.*"

Which having explained to his wife, the conversation terminated, much more to their satisfaction than either had apprehended it would have done.

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Our readers, from what we have written, will naturally suppose that these most earnest aspirations of the parents were not to be gratified, and that the smile of recognition was never to light up the innocent countenance of their first-born son. If so, they are mistaken. The fact of having an object always before the eye, will gradually impress such a habit of attachment to it, as sooner or later will not fail to manifest itself in many ways. When the little innocent had reached the age of two years and a half, his mother received a visit from a Mrs. St. John, a young cousin of hers, who had been recently married. It was about the middle of September, and her husband was somewhere in the yard, preparing to go out to shoot. Mrs. St. John very naturally took the child in her arms, and was about to caress him, when he turned from her, and stretching his little hands towards his mamma, cried to get to her. The quick eye of the mother perceived it all, and the suddenness of joy caused her to give a short scream, but in a moment she restrained her feelings lest the child might become alarmed. She stretched out her arms, the child stretched out his to meet her, and as he did it, he looked up into her face and smiled. It was too much for her, and this consummation of her hopes came too unexpectedly upon her heart. The next moment she sank upon the sofa, where she had been sitting with the child clasped to her bosom, and for a short time lay insensible, to the utter consternation of her cousin. On recovering, she rallied as well as she could, and having dropped hastily upon her knees, held her boy up, as it were to heaven,—but the fullness of her gratitude was such that language was denied her. She sobbed aloud, however, and wept for many minutes, until she felt that this delicious luxury of tears relieved her. She then rang the bell, and inquired from one of the servants if her master had gone out, who pointed to him just as he was in the act of passing from the gate that opened into the avenue and lawn. Pen, ink, and

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paper, were immediately got, and in a few minutes she despatched a messenger after him with the following brief but touching communication—

"May the name of God be praised for ever!

"My dear Alick—return immediately—our child's eyes have smiled upon its mother—he knows me—oh, he knows *me!* I am too—too—happy—and the tears that blot this are tears of gratitude and delight. "YOUR OWN JANE."

It is unnecessary for us to detail the enraptured father's return, or the scene which immediately took place, inasmuch as our readers, we feel assured, can much better conceive than we could describe it.

In due course of time the father also was recognized, and subsequently the sisters and his little brother. What a happy family at this period was that of which we write. Not a wish had they ungratified. Without ambition, pride, or the sordid spirit of this vile world, they lived together in peace, and love, and harmony. It is true, Wilson felt a certain degree of good-natured vanity, touching the prophetic penetration he had displayed, with reference to little Alick:—

"I told you, love," he would often say to his wife, "that he would in time recognize us all, and that the intellect of many children destined to become eminent is of slow development. You see the first part of my prophecy came true, and take my word for it, so will the last. That child is decreed to be an uncommon child, and will be heard of yet."

Where are the hearts that can quarrel with such language, when proceeding from the lips of a father? If there be any such, we do not envy them the coolness of their philosophy, nor that superiority of wisdom which condemns what after all has in it more of virtue than of weakness. In the meantime, month after month followed, until the child had reached the close of his third year. For about three months preceding this, however, the doting parents were occasionally startled by

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many vague impressions that were caused by his very singular manner and habits. His character was marked by an apathy, which they could not at all understand. He manifested, for instance, the utmost indifference to the quality of his food, and was often found eating substances which even the instinct of childhood itself at his age would avoid. He could utter also only a few indistinct words, from the enunciation of which, it was quite clear that his organs of speech were either of slow growth, or imperfect in their formation. But he was at the same time so mild, and gentle, and inoffensive, that every one loved him, and his parents neither could nor would receive into their hearts the dreadful surmises which some of the servants and many strangers now began to entertain concerning his mind. It could not, however, be long concealed that the stamp of reason was not upon him. Day after day the withering truth became more clear, and although his parents felt many a hope and many a wish, that time would by degrees evolve from his mind those principles of reason which had not yet appeared in their first elements, yet, alas! time only confirmed the frightful fact—that their mild, and sweet, and harmless child—the principal hope of their house and of their heart—was an idiot from his birth!

What pen, when this fearful discovery was made, could depict the grief and agony of his distracted parents? For many weeks their sorrow was like that of those who are without hope. Medical advice was immediately procured, and every thing done that could in the remotest degree be supposed capable of rendering the harmless creature any assistance. Even the peasant doctor, with his list of infallible herbs, and the wise old woman, reported to be equally successful, were all tried, but in vain. The hopes of his at all becoming rational were gone for ever.

There are circumstances in which many persons hesitate not to consider the death of those who are dear to them as a relief.

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For some months after the heart-breaking fact was proved, Wilson and his wife imagined that they would rather see their son dead than live through life a hapless idiot. An attack of measles, however, soon taught them how little they knew of their own hearts. It was then that the pain he felt, but could not express, drew about him a brooding tenderness, that trembled, or we might rather say, shrank back into agony, at the bare contemplation of his loss.

"Let him but be spared," said his mother; "what is it after all but to lead for so many years as God may allot him, a harmless and happy life of childhood. If he is denied the use of reason, he is saved from the responsibility of sin and crime. Are we not taught that of such as he is the kingdom of heaven?"

Indeed, it is very difficult to know the depths to which affection reaches in the human heart. Mrs. Wilson had thought it impossible that any circumstance could have increased that which she felt for her boy, previous to the discovery of his affecting infirmity. The love of a mother, however, becomes strong in proportion to the claims of its object, which, indeed, shows a beautiful economy in the arrangement of our moral feelings. A child, for instance, is loved with an affection peculiarly vigilant and cherishing, because its absolute dependence on the parent renders this description of attachment not merely necessary but delightful. In proportion, however, as it grows up into manhood, the attachment which is felt for it, though losing none of its strength, ceases to be characterized by the gushes of tenderness and endearment, which are lavished upon innocence and infancy. So was it with Mrs. Wilson, who now unhappily aware that the helplessness of the poor boy was, as she said, to extend through life, began to feel a new principle of love spring up towards him, which was superinduced by the incurable malady of his mind, and his utter dependence upon *her* care and affection.

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From little Alick's birth, until he was seized by the measles, he never had a day's illness; but *now* there was something in the sickness and pain which the poor child felt so inexpressibly touching, that very few could look on his sufferings, or hear his moans, with an unmoved heart. What, then, must not his parents, whose love for him was such as the reader knows, have felt? The doctor attended him every day; but, as for his mother, she was never from beside his bed, day or night; and indeed, if she only absented herself from the room, even for a short time, his mild but languid eye would keep searching about and exploring every corner, with an expression in it so full of sorrow, and an affectionate longing for her appearance, that nothing on earth could present a more affecting object of pity and attachment.

One day, when he happened to be left accidentally alone by the nurse who had charge of him, his mother stole lightly to the room door, as she was in the habit of doing, lest, should he be asleep, the noise of her footsteps might awaken him. On looking in, she perceived that there was no one in the room, and paused a moment to ascertain, by the manner of his breathing, if he were asleep. The child neither saw her, nor could he have heard her foot. However, while listening, as we have said, the words "Mamma, come—mamma, come," fell faintly on her ear, for the poor thing was not able, from illness, to utter them above his breath. She immediately went over, and laying her head down beside his, spoke to him tenderly; he immediately raised his little feverish hand, and placing it on her neck, said, as if to himself, "*now*," intimating his satisfaction at having her beside him. It is unnecessary to say, that the sluices of the mother's grief were opened, or that her tears fell in showers upon his cheek.

Another incident, equally affecting, took place after he had been for some days on the recovery. His father, notwithstanding that he had the concerns of his farm to manage, went

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into the nursery several times every day to see him. On one of those occasions, the child expressed, by his feeble gestures, a wish that he would stoop down to him. He did so; and the poor boy's eyes expressed happiness. When the father, however, was about to withdraw himself, and leave him, the child, looking upon him, uttered one word, which went to the uttermost depths of his heart—"Stay!"

He stooped again, kissing him, not without tears, at this pathetic instance of attachment, and, in a few minutes, the affectionate innocent was asleep.

If this illness of the mindless boy made his parents feel what a deep affliction his death would have been to them, his recovery, on the other hand, filled them with a satisfaction which, in a great measure, reconciled them to his melancholy privation. Henceforth he was watched, and cherished, and caressed by his sisters, as a brother whom they ought to love and tend the more, in consequence of his incapacity to take care of himself. And, to render them their due, it is but just to say, that nothing could surpass the unceasing attention which they paid him. He was the helpless one of the family—the centre of all their affections—the innocent being whom every one was to please, and none to offend. No matter what accident he might have been the cause of—what little play-thing he broke, or what command he transgressed, one word was sufficient for all—"it was poor Alick."

His parents felt it as one great comfort, that, in his idiocy, there was nothing whatsoever that could be termed repulsive or disgusting; on the contrary, it was marked by a serene and mild spirit, that breathed a melancholy beauty about his sweet and inoffensive character. His face was pale, but his skin clear and indicative of health; his hair fair, and his blue eyes remarkable for that innocent artlessness which is found often to mark the expression of those unhappy beings who are born with so faint a portion of the light of reason. But, though

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healthy, the poor boy was of a slender make, and the feebleness of his physical frame still knit him more closely into the hearts of all those whose affections prompted them to guard him against accident and danger.

Of all the members of his family, however, there was none perhaps so beloved by him as his little brother, companion, and playfellow, Willy—nor any, I might add, who loved him so well. They were inseparable—rising and lying down, eating, sleeping, and playing together. Willy, though younger, soon became his guide and his champion; and an affecting thing it was to see the little fellow resent and punish the injuries rendered by their thoughtless or wicked playfellows to his innocent and peaceful brother. A sense of this gradually wrought itself into the unshaped principle of gratitude, which lay at the sweet boy's heart, and brought out a trait of attachment to his little brother, which, perhaps, was not felt for any other person whatsoever. He therefore learned to depend upon him, for, indeed, without him he could do nothing, and would scarcely venture any where. Many a time have their parents watched them—their hearts overflowing with affection towards both, as, with their little arms wreathed round each other's necks, they walked about the lawn—a perfect living picture of love and affection.

Indeed, both parents were now, we might say, as much resigned to the condition of their child, as it was possible, under such circumstances, to be. Every little incident connected with the boy, and indeed with both, filled their hearts with that enjoyment which love like that they bore them can extract from such details. If their father, for instance, happened to be absent, even in the fields, the moment they saw him approach the house, both would run to meet him, and, looking up to him with happy faces, each would thrust a little hand into his, and in this manner all would return to the house, the delighted parent listening to their prattle, or

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attempting to answer queries which would often pose philosophy herself to solve or unravel.

Little Alick's utterance had now become so distinct that he could pronounce intelligibly enough, whilst, at the same time, every word was marked by those balbutiæ which hang about the accents of childhood, and which also cling so frequently through life to the imperfect enunciation which is found to characterize natural weakness of intellect. This defect is almost always apparent in the language of those who are born without the faculty divine; but it acts, at the same time, as the exponent of their innocence, reminding those who might thoughtlessly ridicule or harm them, that their hearts are as infantine as their accents. Such as we have attempted to describe was the gentle tenour of his happy life, which resembled in some degree the beautiful strain of wild and melancholy music which one often hears in a dream; not that it passed without those occurrences that are always magnified by the heart, and which, when death removes those dear objects of our love, come back to the memory with a poignancy that gives such a bitter and abiding character to our sorrow.

We shall recite a few of those little records of innocence, and if they may appear unimportant to our readers, let them reflect that they were not deemed so by the hearts to whom our mindless boy was dear. And let such as have been bereft of some beloved little one—perhaps the very star of their once happy hearth, whose joyous voice is silent among them for ever—let such we say, ask their teeming memories, whether or not the slightest incident that ever occurred to the departed one, becomes not a matter of deep and cherished recollection to the bruised heart.

There is scarcely any thing more likely to induce a belief in the doctrine of Guardian Spirits, than a consideration of the many almost miraculous escapes which may be witnessed in the lives of children. One of those which befel little Alick, we

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shall mention. The day on which it occurred was warm and sultry, the time being about the middle of June: he and Willy had been out playing from about one to two o'clock, when his brother brought him home, for both got hungry, and wanted bread and butter. In a short time his manly little guardian, overcome by heat and exercise, fell asleep, and the poor boy sauntered out to amuse himself in a little solitary ramble, as he had been in the habit of doing only when any slight indisposition or other cause prevented his brother from accompanying him. On his way to a pasture-field behind the house, he met one of the serving-women, who wore a red kerchief on her neck; the boy was struck with it, and pointing up to his own neck, asked her to put it on him. Every member of the household felt a pleasure in complying with the harmless wishes of the gentle creature, and she accordingly took it off her own neck, and pinned it around his shoulders, just as she herself had worn it. He immediately felt it with apparent curiosity, and giving her a look indicative of the pride and delight of a child, held out his hand to her, which he never did, unless when highly gratified.

"Bessy is good, Willy," said he, and as he spoke he looked about inquiringly, exclaiming, "Where is Willy? Bessy is good," said he, "and when she grows big, me will buy her a watch"—a promise which his father was in the habit of making to himself. He lingered about the lawn for some time, admiring the gaudy colour of the kerchief, and feeling its texture, when, passing through a gate which was accidentally and negligently left open, he entered an adjoining field, and sauntered along, murmuring to himself, or addressing his little brother, and then starting with surprise on perceiving that he was not with him.

Now it so happened that Wilson, anxious to improve the breed of his cattle, had a few days before purchased a very fine bull, which he ordered to be turned into the field in ques-

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tion. This animal, one known to entertain a fierce antipathy against the colour of red, immediately on seeing the child pass him, began to growl forth those low terrific bellowings which indicate his rage, and to paw the ground, which he also tore up with his thick strong horns; his furious, but downcast eyes glaring with actual fire, whilst the hot smoke rolled out in blue volumes from his expanded nostrils. The caprices of such innocents as Alick, and indeed of all children with respect to their play-things, are proverbial. At the very moment when the enraged beast started at full speed for the child's destruction, and when to a spectator his life was absolutely beyond hope or relief, he pulled off the kerchief, and throwing it from him, walked away without being even aware of his danger. The animal, still attracted by the glare of the hated colour, turned his rage upon the kerchief, which he gored and spurned and trampled on, with a degree of fury that was appalling, when we consider the helpless being, from whom the Providence of God, through the instrumentality of so slight an incident, had averted it. The screams of the female servant, the sole eye-witness of this frightful occurrence, for she had been sent out to seek him, were so loud and long, that the whole family ran with horror to the gate which opened into the field where the animal was kept. She had presence of mind, however, instantly to undeceive them by saying he was safe; and his own appearance at the gate, calm and placid as if nothing had happened, gave them full assurance that with him all was well. In half an hour afterwards the animal was shot, and Alick was watched with a vigilance so acute, that out of his father's house he was seldom or never afterwards suffered to be alone.

There were other instances of what might be termed Providential interposition in his behalf, equally striking, but it is not our intention to dwell upon them as especial arguments from which to draw particular inferences; for we are well aware that however the hand of God be visible in such occur-

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rences, they may by very plausible reasoning be also imputed to the contingencies which arise out of the innumerable variety of incidents that meet and harmonize together, or clash like antagonist principles in life.

The next record, therefore, of the gentle boy, which we shall put down, is one of a different and much more pathetic description. His mother's love for him, as the reader already knows, was in wakeful watchfulness and glowing tenderness of heart, almost beyond the ordinary love of mothers, sweet and beautiful as that most affectionate and divine principle is. She it was, who with her own hands washed her helpless son, and combed down his fair and silken locks; and having done this, she looked upon the innocence with which he held up his lips for the kiss which rewarded his patience, as her most delightful recompense.

It happened, however, that this mother, whom he loved with an affection so wildly fervent and habitual, became ill, and after having struggled for two or three days against a slight attack of fever, was forced to intermit her labour of love, and allow her darling child to be washed and combed by his eldest sister, whom next to mamma and Willy he doated on. He submitted to this, it is true, but it was with a countenance in which could be plainly read the fact, that his gentle spirit missed that tenderness of the mother's hand, which it is in vain to seek for in any other—that mysterious charm which in after life, and when that mother is in dust, comes over memory like a fragrance, and brings the heart back from present misery, sorrow, and calamity, to those days of innocence and happiness which make a mother's love shine as the only star which can light us back through the darkness of the past, to those days which the bitter present turns into happiness by the contrast.

This attack, which confined his mother to her bed for a few days, proved to be one of no serious apprehension, either to

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the physician who attended her, or to her own friends. Nothing in life, however, could present a more affectionate, touching, and melancholy proof of loneliness and sorrow, than the conduct of this pitiable child. His daily amusements, his play-things, nay, even his brother, Willy—all—all were forgotten, and the poor thing went about moping and speaking to himself, and evidently unhappy; his pale face was shaded with care, and marked by a wild anxiety, which, when the cause was known, scarcely any one could look upon with an insensible heart. No matter to what part of the house he might be brought, he was ere long found either in or near her sick chamber, stealing to her side, or when gently intimidated from entering it, watching about the door, or sitting speaking to himself outside upon the lobby. On one of these occasions, Wilson had gone up after breakfast to inquire after her health, and finding her better, was about to depart, when he and his wife heard his quiet and gentle tread coming up the stairs. Having been previously forbidden, however, he feared to enter the sick room, lest he might disturb her, but sat down upon the lobby, and began, as usual, to murmur to himself. The parents listened, and in a little time heard from him the following words—and what heart, much less that of a parent, could withstand them:—

"Me would give any ting, any ting—me would give the WHOLE WORLD, if my mamma was well!"

The mother started up and extended her arms, sobbing out, "Bring him to me—bring him to me." The father did so, and after having pressed him to her heart, and bedewed his pale face with tears, she exclaimed—

"My darling child—our helpless one—our delight—our treasure, I *am* well. Your mamma, my blessed boy, *is* well."

"Then, won't you wash and comb me, mamma?"

"Yes, darling, to-morrow I shall be able, I trust."

"And you will kiss me, mamma, too?"

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"Yes, my heart, yes."

"Then, me will go and tell Willy that mamma will wash and kiss me *again*," he exclaimed; and, as he spoke, he passed gently out of the room to seek his brother, and communicate to him the removal of the care which had for the last few days pressed upon his innocent spirit.

Many a bitter tear did these words cause that mamma to shed, long after his beloved face and fair shining head had been removed from among the circle, which his affection had drawn round him.

It was also on an occasion similar to the last, that is, a transient indisposition of his mamma, that the circumstance we are about to relate occurred. His father, until her convalescence, slept in another apartment, and, as a gratification to the two boys, he proposed that they should sleep with him alternately. He also made this concession a privilege, and told them that if either of them did wrong, or were guilty of any impropriety, the offender should be debarred the right of enjoying it. Alick, as the eldest, had his claim first granted, and a singular delight it seemed to give the child. He kissed his papa—laughed often—murmured little words and fragments of short sentences, which nobody understood but himself and his brother; and finally fell asleep, singing a little nursery song, which one of his sisters had a few days before taught him. On the following day, he asked his mamma—for during her indisposition he was always either in her room or near it—if she would give him a penny.

"What do you intend to do with it, darling?" she inquired.

"It's about papa," he said, nodding with a smile, which seemed to indicate some little plan or mystery.

"Well, I will not inquire," added his mother; "but you shall have it, my life." She accordingly rang the bell, and desired a servant to get him the penny, which he could not be prevailed upon to take unless in two halfpence.

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When bed-time arrived, his father was not a little surprised to see the poor child struggling, with a singular degree of haste, to anticipate his brother in claiming his right of sleeping where he had slept the night before. The father was struck with this, and knowing that in point of fact the child was wrong, he began to reason with him as well as he could.

"It is not your night, my dear Alick—this is Willy's night."

"No, papa, me bought it—Willy has the two——"

"Two what, my darling?"

But ere the father, or his little brother could speak, he got into bed, and said, "Me bought it, papa, and Willy has them," and he put his little arms about his father's neck. The father was anxious to understand the principles upon which the child acted, and consequently asked his brother if *he* understood what Alick said, when the little fellow replied at once that he did not.

"Me bought it, papa," said the child, and he clasped his father still closer; "me paid it in Willy's pocket."

"What did you pay, my darling?" said the father, without actually knowing the poor boy's meaning.

"Me paid two little pennies, papa—not a big penny—into Willy's pocket—he buy powder for his cannon, me sleep with papa."

Upon examining the pockets of his little brother, it was found that the innocent creature thought he had gained his point, by slipping unawares into them what he considered to be an equivalent for the privilege of sleeping with his father—that is, the two halfpence which he had asked for that especial purpose from his mother. The affecting plea succeeded on that occasion, for his little brother had been taught to make every concession to him, and his father clasped him with a more fervent pressure to his heart, in consequence of the artless trick through which the dear child attempted to outdo his brother, by a bargain, which his want of intellect only, rendered incom-

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patible with moral truth. It was quite evident that the poor boy, by putting, without his brother's knowledge, the two halfpence into his pocket, had accomplished, upon his own harmless and innocent system, the bargain which experience and common sense would manage in a different manner. Such was the reasoning of a disorganized head; but who could avoid being touched by the motives of the heart?

Thus was it that a calamity so distressing as that to which the serene and harmless child was born, by degrees changed its character so much, in consequence of the love his parents, and sisters, and brother bore him, that it almost ceased to be looked upon as such. The quiet inoffensive child was emphatically the pet of the whole family; and not a day passed that had not its loving records of what he either did or said. In this manner not only did time pass happily, but we may add that the very existence of the boy had now become, from the habits of their strong affection for him, essential to the happiness they felt. We have now arrived, however, at the period, when all the hearts that loved him were to be overshadowed by his loss—when the lengthened childhood of their gentle and innocent boy was to close—and his murmuring voice and quiet smile, and flaxen head were all to be seen and heard no more. No more were his little plans of love to be effected—or his little barterings with his brother to take place; and never again was his timid step to be heard stealing in artless sorrow and sympathy to the sick bed of his mother, whom, in his innocence, he thought his kiss might cure.

At the beginning of spring, about his eighth year, the malady which took him off appeared in the family. This was the scarlatina, or red devil, as it ought more appropriately to be called. At first it came upon all the children except himself, whom it seemed to spare. This was, however, a treacherous indulgence, and its subsequent attack on their favourite, just when all the others had got over it, was felt with the greater

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severity, in consequence of their previous hope that he had escaped it. His mother at the time was confined to her bed; but hearing that her boy had caught it, and that he declined receiving attendance from any hand but hers, she rose up as if she possessed the power of checking or shaking off the complaint she laboured under, and from that moment, until her beloved breathed his last, a space of eight days and eight nights, she lay not on a bed, closed not an eye even for one moment, nor ever once complained of, or felt any symptoms of her own illness.* All her sufferings—every thought and feeling of her heart were absorbed in the sufferings of her gentle child. Such was, and such is the love of a mother. There she sat, or stood, bending over his bed, assuaging his pain as well as she could, anticipating his wants, administering his medicine, and holding the drink to his feverish lips,—watching, cherishing, soothing him—exhausting, in short, all the ingenious devices of affection, and fighting his battle against this most formidable malady. For four days the doctor, a talented and humane man, felt himself justified in affording them hope, but on the fifth, their pale, clear-skinned boy was actually the colour of scarlet. The doctor shook his head—recovery, it is true, if the child's physical strength were greater, might be possible; but in this case, he feared for the result. Still he would not absolutely give him up; though at the same time he considered it his duty to bid them, at all events, to hold themselves prepared for the worst.

Language could not describe the sorrow and despair which settled upon the whole family, when they heard this unfavourable opinion of his medical attendant. The fact of the other children having been so slightly affected, prevented his parents, who had never seen the complaint before, from entertaining any serious apprehensions of Alick. On the contrary, they imagined

* Let no one doubt this, for it is true.

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that, as in the other cases, it would come to a crisis, then abate, and in the course of a few days altogether disappear—leaving their guarded treasure enfeebled, it is true, and helpless for a time, but still with a constitution not seriously injured by his illness. Nay, they were not without some latent hopes—and how delightful were these hopes!—that it might be possible for the child's intellect to be developed by that organic change in the brain, which sometimes results from violent and temporary disease, in such a manner as to restore reason, after its exercise had been even for a considerable time suspended. After two days more, it was quite clear that the doctor entertained no hope of him, and dreadful and terrible did this heart-breaking announcement come upon them all. Not that *they* absolutely despaired of him, for truly may it be said—as it was felt in this instance, that love will hope when the very quiver of death is trembling in the heart of those it loves.

Nothing, however, which we could write, can give the reader such a clear and affecting account of this innocent death-bed, as the short journal, written at his bed-side, by his mother, of his sufferings, and of the affliction into which the certainty that he was to be taken away for ever, plunged them all. This affecting record of the innocent's last moments, commenced on the very day the doctor told them to be prepared for the worst, just forty-eight hours before his death. It is an artless one, and the minuteness of the details will be easily overlooked by those who have lost, or who fear to lose any child that is dear to them, "as the ruddy drops that warm their hearts."

"April 15, ten o'clock, A. M.—The doctor has this day forbidden us to hope, but we know that God of his infinite mercy can restore our innocent child, if it seem good to him. I have, since the appearance of the complaint among us, heard of children recovering after a more malignant attack, and more unfavourable symptoms than his. But lest it should be the

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will of the Almighty to remove him, I am resolved to mark down a register of our darling's pains and sufferings, and of every thing connected with him, in order that when he is gone, we can bring him back to our memory, during the most affecting period of his brief but happy life. May God support me, and sustain us all; but surely when we feel that he is about to be withdrawn from us, this grief is natural. The doctor says the worst symptom about the dear one, is the heavy feverish look that is in his eyes. Heavy indeed is the look of my beloved, and loaded with sickness, yet has he moments when he wishes to talk with his brother, and to have him about him. His eldest sister, to whom he was so much attached, is, now that she has heard the doctor's opinion, weeping bitterly in her own room, kissing his little coat, and pressing every part of his dress to her heart. She told Willy that his brother was going to die, and asked him, whilst she sobbed aloud, what would he do after his little play-fellow? The innocent child replied, that he would not let him die. 'Alas, my darling,' she returned, 'I fear that in spite of papa and mamma and all, death will take him.'

"'But I will kill death,' said the manly little child. His sister kissed him, but only wept the more.

"Twelve o'clock.—Alick is awake, and seems a little easier. He is now arranging his little play-things about his pillow, and has two small tops, one his own and the other Willy's, which he made a present of to him yesterday. There is also his whip, three halfpence, and a little thin bottle, in which his brother put some sweetmeats, that he might be able to see their variegated colours through the glass—a sight in which he takes great delight. There the beloved child lies arranging them as well as he can; whilst ever and anon his heavy eye turns round to see that *I am with him;* he then calls mamma, and when I ask him what he wants, he looks at me and smiles, feebly saying, 'Do not leave me.'

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"Oh how will my heart part with him? How can I give him up! Am not I his mother? Sustain—sustain me, O God!

"Two o'clock, P. M.—His brother has come to his bed-side, and he seems pleased to see him. He has given him his little top, saying, 'Keep my top, Willy.'

"'Sure you wouldn't die and leave me, Alick,' said the innocent child. 'No, Willy,' he replied; but he knows not what either the question or answer means. Oh this is almost too much for my heart!

"At first, none except his eldest sister was told that he must die, but her affectionate heart was too full to keep the secret—alas! I fear it cannot be long one—from the rest. They have all come in one by one to kiss him, and are now weeping bitterly together in the parlour, with the exception of his brother, who is incapable of understanding what is meant by dying. But hush! I hear his father's cautious step upon the stairs, and oh how I tremble on thinking of the love which that father bore him; but our sweet one is awake, and is always glad and happy when he sees him. * * *

"The visit to his child has been paid, and the father's grief appears ungovernable. Alas! we never lost a child before, and grief is new to us. His father appears to be utterly without comfort; he cannot eat, not attend to the concerns of his farm, nor to any business whatsoever. But I knew it would be thus, for I knew how he loved him. He tried to restrain his grief as much as he could, but it occasionally burst forth in spite of him. The dear child, who never saw him weep before, looked at him with an expression of wonder that showed him to be unconscious of the cause of his father's sorrow—a circumstance which only increased it the more. It would appear, however, that in some measure the beloved child feels as if his present situation were connected with the affliction of the family, for when asked how he is, he uniformly replies, 'better.' But

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indeed the natural gentleness and kindness of his disposition were always remarkable.

"His father, who thinks of a thousand ways to please him, put into his little hands a silver sixpence, fresh and glittering from the mint; he gave a faint smile as he looked upon his father, and said in a low and feeble voice, 'Thank you, papa.' He examined it a good while, much pleased, and has it still in his hand.

"His father, when about to leave the room, turned to me, his countenance beaming for a moment with unexpected hope —'What,' he exclaimed, 'if he should still live! I care not if all my worldly substance is taken away, provided that he and they are spared to me. I would rather beg with him'—he could add no more, for he caught the heavy and death-like expression of the child's eye, and rushed out of the room. The poor child is quiet, as he always was, and gives but little trouble.

"Nine o'clock at night.—His father has caused a consultation to be held, and the opinion is that he will not pass twelve o'clock to-morrow night. I can scarcely keep his sisters from weeping over him, and oppressing him with their kisses. My darling's utterance is so low that he can scarcely be heard, and so infantine that he speaks (when he attempts to speak), as a child of two years old. Life is ebbing fast, and he can do little more than moan lowly, and make signs to express his little wants. When I give him a drink, he turns his eyes up into my face with thankfulness, and then lays down his head so quietly and composedly upon the pillow, that my heart is sorely tried to look upon it.

"Midnight.—His father has just looked in, for he cannot sleep, and stood over his bed. The child is sleeping!—oh, who can tell what this short sleep may do for him? Should he, after all, recover! But this is a hope in which I fear to indulge, because of what we must suffer, should it prove ill

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founded; still, it looks well, for he has had no sleep for the last three days and nights. God, after all, can prove a safe physician, when all human aid fails. No! I will not despair—while there is life, there is hope. His father joins me in this, and is in much better spirits. I have prevailed upon him to go to bed, on promising to call him, should any change for the worse take place.

"Two o'clock, A. M.—I have heard an account of a singular circumstance about our beloved from the children. It appears that, a few hours before he was seized with the first symptoms of his illness, he was out in the garden playing with his sisters and brother. The day was calm and bright, and the sky unusually clear. The dear child looked up into the sky, for a minute, during which he mused in silence, and at once appeared to forget the play in which he was engaged; at length he said, addressing them, and pointing upwards with his finger, 'Isn't *there* heaven?' To which they replied in the affirmative. 'Then,' said he, 'me will get wings, and fly up, and go to heaven, and me will never come down any more.'* In less than two hours after this, my child was obliged to go to bed. Is it possible that God permits, in some cases, an unconscious but prophetic intimation of death to escape from the lips of innocence, in order to prepare the hearts of others for its loss? I cannot tell; but I feel that there is something peculiarly awful and holy, as well as heart-rending and sorrowful, about the death-bed of a child. Children leave behind them no sense or conviction of guilt or crime to check our grief, nor any other remembrance of them in our souls, than such as are associated with purity and innocence; their loss, therefore, is never properly appreciated, until we either lose or are about to lose them for ever. One of the most affecting passages in the New Testament is this: 'Suffer *little children* to come to me, for of *such* is the kingdom of heaven.'

*Fact.

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"Four o'clock.—My child is awake, and, eternal glory be to God! he is much, very much better; appears refreshed, and asks for some food. The whole family are asleep, even to the poor nurse, who sits up to prepare the drinks, which he will take from no hand but *mine*. I will not disturb them; yet my heart is bursting to communicate to them the good tidings of this change for the better. Oh, if he should still be spared to us! Thou seest, O God of all goodness, that the tears I now shed are those of gratitude for the change which is on my beloved. Is he to live?—oh, the thought is too much—I cannot write.

* * * * * *

"Six o'clock, morning.—They are all up. His papa has been in and kissed him, and is in ecstacy. The darling child has never let the little bright silver sixpence out of his hand since he got it. They have *all* kissed him, and all are in a tumult of joy and hope. My own heart trembles between hope and fear; but indeed hope is the stronger. Why should he get better now, unless the change was that of a crisis which will bring him, by degrees, out of the danger in which he has been? He is actually amusing himself once more with his little play-things—has Willy's top in his hand, and asks to see his father. He is now turning the little silver sixpence, and looking upon it with a kind of novel delight. When our darling speaks, however, we are obliged to put down our ears to his lips, for his voice and enunciation are gone. He wants something, but still looks upon the bright sixpence. 'What is it, my heart's treasure?'

"'Papa.'

"'I have sent for him, sweetest life.' Oh, may God pity that papa, if any thing happens you, my darling love!

"His father is bending over him.—'What is it, my own sweet and darling child? Did you not wish for papa, my own heart's delight?'

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"The child held up the little sixpence to him, with something nearer a smile than his illness for the last four days would allow him. He held it up, and spoke, but his father was still obliged to put down his ear to his mouth, in order to hear what he said. It was, as before, glancing from the sixpence to his father. 'Thank you, papa.' * * * Such was the affectionate heart of our beloved!

"Twelve o'clock, noon.—All glory be to God! The doctor has been with him,—says he is decidedly better. Wine, a little, is ordered—as our darling's physical constitution, though healthy, has been always weak. He can, however, taste nothing, and will taste nothing, but two-milk whey. His father, on his recovery, has expressed his intention to bestow a large sum for the support of orphans, who, of course, have none but strangers to attend them *in their illness.* There is something *now* tells me, however—for say what they will, and think what they may—*I see* that my beloved's strength is wearing away fast; but why should I deprive them of a glimpse of happiness;—but something tells me that the last sands of our beloved are nearly run.

"Evening, nine o'clock.—Am *I* also to hope? Joy is among them all; but *I* am with him every moment; and *I fear*—yet am not *altogether* without hope—watching and sorrow may have naturally depressed my spirits more than theirs—*no* I am *not* without hope.

"Eleven o'clock.—Oh, God, that has happened which *almost*, if any thing could reconcile me to his death, would. The child turned round his head, and, observing our Bible—the family Bible—in which the births of all our children are registered—expressed, by signs, a wish to his father that he would bring it to him. Rapturously, and with intense delight, did he comply with this intimation of the darling boy. The child, on getting it into the bed, signed to us to raise him; and his father put his arm around him, and kept him easily up. With

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difficulty he got his feeble hands to the book, but could not, from weakness, open it. His father opened it for him; and he put his slender finger to the print, and moved it as if he were reading—then tried to turn over a leaf, which was instantly done for him, and he went on still moving his blessed lips, as if reading; he then turned up his eyes towards heaven, as he had seen us do, and fell back." * * * * *

The mother—the patient, but heart-broken mother, could carry her little register of love, in which there is not one allusion to her own suffering, no farther; but we, who know what happened, must complete it for her.

Their beloved one fell back, but did not immediately pass away. He attempted many little words, among which were uttered those of Mamma, Papa, and Willy, with great feebleness. Every moment, however, brought him nearer and nearer to his close. His mother's arms were about him, and all the family surrounding his bed, when, at one o'clock of "the Resurrection morn," for it was Easter night—the gentle, the loved one, the bright and fair haired, the cherished, the guarded, the innocent, the helpless—in a word, the dim but ever unclouded star of their hearth, and, what is still more, the idol of his father's heart—and yet stronger, of his mother's—laid back his head, with a gentle motion, as if going to sleep—but one or two gasps that heaved up his little chest more than usual, passed away, and there was a silence. They waited a time—they raised his head—it fell back; they felt his pulse—there was none; they laid him down—they looked upon his motionless and placid face—— * * * * *

"You are—you are his mother! Watching him and tending him, and want of rest, have overcome you for a little—you fainted; but you know he is in heaven. My darling, do not ask it; you know he cannot speak to you now. Alas! he knows no mother now—no father—no sister—no brother: all the ties of his life are dissolved for ever."

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At length her grief exhausted itself, and nature, sorrow, the illness she had warded off, together with want of sleep for eight days and eight nights—all overcame her, and she slept soundly for some hours on that melancholy night.

His father had caused all the family to retire to bed except the servants, and was pacing in utter distraction through the room, when one of them entered, and related the following, with tears in her eyes—for dear indeed was the inoffensive boy to every individual who knew him.

She said, that at the moment he breathed his last, she and another female servant, together with his eldest daughter, had been in the parlour, where a pair of candles were burning; the parlour door was open—when, visible to the three persons, a snow-white dove or pigeon flew in, and crossed the room to one of the windows, through which it passed like a shadow, without let or obstruction, although the window was closed.* Subsequently her fellow-servant on being questioned, corroborated the fact, as did his daughter, who solemnly assured him, not only that she saw it most distinctly, but went immediately to the window to ascertain whether any part of it were open, and upon examination found that it was shut. This is no fiction, conceived merely for the purpose of giving effect to an imaginary narrative, but a literal fact, which was proved by the collateral evidence of three persons, who witnessed it at the same time, and in the same place.

Wilson was then plunged in affliction too violent to pause upon a circumstance so singular, except only as it served to increase his grief. Having ordered the servants to seek rest, he indulged in all the vehemence of sorrow over his child; but alas, there was no eye then to turn up in affection upon him—no faint smile to move those innocent lips—no little hand to thrust affectionately into his—and no soft sweet voice of joy to

* An unquestionable fact, and was witnessed as above by the three persons mentioned. We give it without comment.

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utter, or to call his name; and deep and terrible was the grief which stunned his head and shook his heart, as if both it and his brain would burst in pieces.

"My son! my son!" he exclaimed, whilst his sobs almost choked him, "for this one night we will sleep together—no artless bribe to your brother is necessary *now*. Next your papa's heart, and in your papa's bosom, will you rest this night—the last, my angel boy, we can never sleep together."

It is literally true. The next morning about five o'clock, the servants, and subsequently his wife and daughters, found him asleep with the body of his lifeless boy in his bosom, their two cheeks reclining against each other as they lay.

But perhaps the most trying scene of this melancholy little narrative, was that which occurred soon afterwards, when his brother Willy came into the room and saw him—dead. He paused, and started, and got pale; then went over, and putting his hand upon him said, "Alick, Alick, speak to me!" To those who looked on, the utter silence, the solemn stillness of death which succeeded this heart-rending question, constituted perhaps the bitterest moment of their sorrow.

"Alick," he said again, and the child's lip began to quiver with emotion, "won't you speak to *me*—to your own Willy?"

But there, in the calm repose of the dead, lay the serene face of his now unconscious brother and play-fellow.

The affectionate child could bear no more—and the wail of his grief, as he kissed him, and called loudly upon his name, had in it a desolateness of spirit, which smote the hearts of his parents beyond the power of language to express, and of many hearts to conceive.

Thus passed and closed the life of a happy, but mindless child; such too were the last moments of—as was read with bitterness upon his little coffin—Alexander Wilson, aged eight years.

And what, the gentle reader may inquire, became of the

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little sixpence which he always kept in his hand? Ever since the day on which his body was committed to the darkness of the grave, it has lain next his father's sorrowing heart; nor could the wealth of the universe purchase this precious relic from him.

In the neat parish church there is at present to be seen a small white marble monument, on the top of which, as an emblem at once of his unhappy privation, and his innocence, is *a sightless dove*, underneath which there is nothing but his name and that of his parents.

About a week after his death, his father observed to a friend, during a conversation, of which the departed child was the subject—"My mind was in a sinful and contumacious state for some time before the dear boy's birth. Well—I am punished. Alas, my friend, the truth I am about to utter I now feel deeply. There can be no greater act of impiety towards God, in a rational mind, than *a conditional faith.* Such was not Abraham's, whose child was spared to him in consequence of his *obedience.* As for me,"—but here his grief overcame him, and he burst into tears, exclaiming—"Yes—I am punished—*Alick's gone!*"

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THE THREE WISHES.

AN IRISH LEGEND.

In ancient times there lived a man called Billy Duffy, and he was known to be a great rogue. They say he was descended from the family of the Duffys, which was the reason, I suppose, of his carrying their name upon him.

Billy, in his youthful days, was the best hand at doing nothing in all Europe; devil a mortal could come next or near him at idleness; and, in consequence of his great practice that way, you may be sure that if any man could make a fortune by it he would have done it.

Billy was the only son of his father, barring two daughters; but they have nothing to do with the story I'm telling you. Indeed it was kind father and grandfather for Billy to be handy at the knavery as well as at the idleness; for it was well known that not one of their blood ever did an honest act, except with a roguish intention. In short, they were altogether a *dacent* connexion, and a credit to the name. As for Billy, all the villany of the family, both plain and ornamental, came down to him by way of legacy; for it so happened that the father, in spite of all his cleverness, had nothing but his roguery to *lave* him.

Billy, to do him justice, improved the fortune he got: every day advanced him farther into dishonesty and poverty, until, at the long run, he was acknowledged on all hands to be the complatest swindler and the poorest vagabond in the whole parish.

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AN IRISH LEGEND

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The three Wishes

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Billy's father, in his young days, had often been forced to acknowledge the inconvenience of not having a trade, in consequence of some nice point in law, called the "Vagrant Act," that sometimes troubled him. On this account he made up his mind to give Bill an occupation, and he accordingly bound him to a blacksmith; but whether Bill was to *live* or *die* by *forgery* was a puzzle to his father,—though the neighbours said that *both* was most likely. At all events, he was put apprentice to a smith for seven years, and a hard card his master had to play in managing him. He took the proper method, however; for Bill was so lazy and roguish that it would vex a saint to keep him in order.

"Bill," says his master to him one day that he had been sunning himself about the ditches, instead of minding his business, "Bill, my boy, I'm vexed to the heart to see you in such a bad state of health. You're very ill with that complaint called an *All-overness;* however," says he, "I think I can cure you. Nothing will bring you about but three or four sound doses, every day, of a medicine called 'the oil o' the hazel.' Take the first dose now" says he; and he immediately banged him with a hazel cudgel until Bill's bones ached for a week afterwards.

"If you were my son," said his master, "I tell you, that, as long as I could get a piece of advice growing convenient in the hedges, I'd have you a different youth from what you are. If working was a sin, Bill, devil an innocenter boy ever broke bread than you would be. Good people's scarce you think; but however that may be, I throw it out as a hint, that you must take your medicine till you're cured, whenever you happen to get unwell in the same way."

From this out he kept Bill's nose to the grinding-stone, and whenever his complaint returned, he never failed to give him a hearty dose for his improvement.

In the course of time, however, Bill was his own man and

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his own master; but it would puzzle a saint to know whether the master or the man was the more precious youth in the eyes of the world.

He immediately married a wife, and devil a doubt of it, but if *he* kept *her* in whiskey and sugar, *she* kept *him* in hot water. Bill drank and she drank; Bill fought and she fought; Bill was idle and she was idle; Bill whacked her and she whacked Bill. If Bill gave her one black eye, she gave him another; *just to keep herself in countenance.* Never was there a blessed pair so well met; and a beautiful sight it was to see them both at breakfast-time blinking at each other across the potato-basket, Bill with his right eye black, and she with her left.

In short, they were the talk of the whole town: and to see Bill of a morning staggering home drunk, his shirt-sleeves rolled up on his smutted arms, his breast open, and an old tattered leather apron, with one corner tucked up under his belt, singing one minute, and fighting with his wife the next;—she, reeling beside him, with a discoloured eye, as aforesaid, a dirty ragged cap on one side of her head, a pair of Bill's old slippers on her feet, a squalling brat on her arm,—now cuffing and dragging Bill, and again kissing and hugging him! yes, it was a pleasant picture to see this loving pair in such a state!

This might do for a while, but it could not last. They were idle, drunken, and ill-conducted; and it was not to be supposed that they would get a farthing candle on their words. They were of course *dhruv* to great straits; and faith, they soon found that their fighting, and drinking, and idleness made them the laughing-sport of the neighbours; but neither brought food to their *childhre,* put a coat upon their backs, nor satisfied their landlord when he came to look for his own. Still the never a one of Bill but was a funny fellow with strangers, though, as we said, the greatest rogue unhanged.

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One day he was standing against his own anvil, completely in a brown study,—being brought to his wit's end how to make out a breakfast for the family. The wife was scolding and cursing in the house, and the naked creatures of childhre squalling about her knees for food. Bill was fairly at an amplush, and knew not where or how to turn himself, when a poor withered old beggar came into the forge, tottering on his staff. A long white beard fell from his chin, and he looked so thin and hungry that you might blow him, one would think, over the house. Bill at this moment had been brought to his senses by distress, and his heart had a touch of pity towards the old man; for, on looking at him a second time, he clearly saw starvation and sorrow in his face.

"God save you, honest man!" said Bill.

The old man gave a sigh, and raising himself, with great pain, on his staff, he looked at Bill in a very beseeching way.

"Musha, God save you kindly!" says he; "maybe you could give a poor, hungry, helpless ould man a mouthful of something to ait? You see yourself I'm not able to work; if I was, I'd scorn to be behoulding to any one."

"Faith, honest man," said Bill, "if you knew who you're speaking to, you'd as soon ask a monkey for a churn-staff as me for either mate or money. There's not a blackguard in the three kingdoms so fairly on the *shaughran* as I am for both the one and the other. The wife within is sending the curses thick and heavy on me, and the childhre's playing the cat's melody to keep her in comfort. Take my word for it, poor man, if I had either mate or money I'd help you, for I know particularly well what it is to want them at the present spaking; an empty sack won't stand, neighbour."

So far Bill told him truth. The good thought was in his heart, because he found himself on a footing with the beggar; and nothing brings down pride, or softens the heart, like feeling what it is to want.

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"Why you are in a worse state than I am," said the old man; "you have a family to provide for, and I have only myself to support."

"You may kiss the book on that, my old worthy," replied Bill; "but come, what I can do for you I will; plant yourself up here beside the fire, and I'll give it a blast or two of my bellows that will warm the old blood in your body. It's a cold, miserable, snowy day, and a good heat will be of service."

"Thank you kindly," said the old man; I *am* cold, and a warming at your fire will do me good, sure enough. Oh, it *is* a bitter, bitter day, God bless it!"

He then sat down, and Bill blew a rousing blast that soon made the stranger edge back from the heat. In a short time he felt quite comfortable, and when the numbness was taken out of his joints, he buttoned himself up and prepared to depart.

"Now," says he to Bill, "you hadn't the food to give me, but *what you could you did.* Ask any three wishes you choose, and be they what they may, take my word for it, they shall be granted."

Now, the truth is, that Bill, though he believed himself a great man in point of 'cuteness, wanted, after all, a full quarter of being square; for there is always a great difference between a wise man and a knave. Bill was so much of a rogue that he could not, for the blood of him, ask an honest wish, but stood scratching his head in a puzzle.

"Three wishes!" said he. "Why, let me see—did you say *three?*"

"Ay," replied the stranger, "three wishes—that was what I said."

"Well," said Bill, "here goes,—aha!—let me alone, my old worthy!—faith I'll over-reach the parish, if what you say is true. I'll cheat them in dozens, rich and poor, old and young; let me alone, man,— I have it here;" and he tapped his forehead with great glee. "Faith, you're the sort to meet of

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a frosty morning, when a man wants his breakfast; and I'm sorry that I have neither money nor credit to get a bottle of whiskey, that we might take our *morning* together."

"Well, but let us hear the wishes," said the old man; "my time is short, and I cannot stay much longer."

"Do you see this sledge hammer?" said Bill; "I wish, in the first place, that whoever takes it up in their hands may never be able to lay it down till I give them lave; and that whoever begins to sledge with it may never stop sledging till it's my pleasure to release him."

"Secondly—I have an arm-chair, and I wish that whoever sits down in it may never rise out of it till they have my consent."

"And thirdly—that whatever money I put into my purse, nobody may have power to take it out of it but myself!"

"You devil's rip!" says the old man in a passion, shaking his staff across Bill's nose, "why did you not ask something that would sarve you both here and hereafter? Sure it's as common as the market-cross, that there's not a vagabone in his Majesty's dominions stands more in need of both."

"Oh! by the elevens," said Bill, "I forgot that altogether! Maybe you'd be civil enough to let me change one of them? The sorra a purtier wish ever was made than I'll make, if you'll give me another chance.

"Get out, you reprobate," said the old fellow, still in a passion. "Your day of grace is past. Little you knew who was speaking to you all this time. I'm St. Moroky, you blackguard, and I gave you an opportunity of doing something for yourself and your family; but you neglected it, and now your fate is cast, you dirty, bog-trotting profligate. Sure it's well known what you are! Aren't you a byword in every body's mouth, you and your scold of a wife? By this and by that, if ever you happen to come across me again, I'll send you to where you won't freeze, you villain!"

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He then gave Bill a rap of his cudgel over the head, and laid him at his length beside the bellows, kicked a broken coal-scuttle out of his way, and left the forge in a fury.

When Billy recovered himself from the effects of the blow, and began to think on what had happened, he could have quartered himself with vexation for not asking great wealth as one of the wishes at least; but now the die was cast on him, and he could only make the most of the three he pitched upon.

He now bethought him how he might turn them to the best account, and here his cunning came to his aid. He began by sending for his wealthiest neighbours on pretence of business; and when he got them under his roof, he offered them the arm-chair to sit down in. He now had them safe, nor could all the art of man relieve them except worthy Bill was willing. Bill's plan was to make the best bargain he could before he released his prisoners; and let him alone for knowing how to make their purses bleed. There wasn't a wealthy man in the country he did not fleece. The parson of the parish bled heavily; so did the lawyer; and a rich attorney, who had retired from practice, swore that the court of Chancery itself was paradise compared to Bill's chair.

This was all very good for a time. The fame of his chair, however, soon spread; so did that of his sledge. In a short time neither man, woman, nor child, would darken his door; all avoided him and his fixtures as they would a spring-gun or man-trap. Bill, so long as he fleeced his neighbours, never wrought a hand's turn; so that when his money was out, he found himself as badly off as ever. In addition to all this, his character was fifty times worse than before; for it was the general belief that he had dealings with the devil. Nothing now could exceed his misery, distress, and ill temper. The wife and he and their children all fought among one another like devils; every body hated them, cursed them, and avoided them. The people thought they were acquainted with more

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than Christian people ought to know; for the family, they said, was very like one that the devil drove. All this, of course, came to Bill's ears, and it vexed him very much.

One day he was walking about the fields, thinking of how he could raise the wind once more; the day was dark, and he found himself, before he stopped, in the bottom of a lonely glen covered by great bushes that grew on each side. "Well," thought he, when every other means of raising money failed him, "it's reported that I'm in league with the devil, and as it's a folly to have the name of the connexion without the profit, I'm ready to make a bargain with him any day;—so," said he, raising his voice, "Nick, you sinner, if you be convanient and willing, why stand out here; show your best leg,—here's your man."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when a dark sober-looking old gentleman, not unlike a lawyer, walked up to him. Bill looked at the foot and saw the hoof.

"Morrow, Nick," says Bill.

"Morrow, Bill," says Nick. "Well, Bill, what's the news?"

"Devil a much myself hears of late," says Bill, "is there any thing *fresh* below?"

"I can't exactly say, Bill; I spend little of my time down now; the Whigs are in office, and my hands are consequently too full of business here to pay much attention to any thing else."

"A fine place this, sir," says Bill, "to take a constitutional walk in; when *I* want an appetite I often come this way myself,—hem! *High* feeding is very bad without exercise."

"High feeding! Come, come, Bill, you know you didn't taste a morsel these four-and-twenty hours."

"You know that's a bounce, Nick. I eat a breakfast this morning that would put a stone of flesh on you, if you only smelt at it."

"No matter; this is not to the purpose. What's that you

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were muttering to yourself awhile ago? If you want to come to the brunt, here I'm for you."

"Nick," said Bill, "you're complate; you want nothing barring a pair of Brian O'Lynn's breeches."

Bill, in fact, was bent on making his companion open the bargain, because he had often heard, that in that case, with proper care on his own part, he might defeat him in the long run. The other, however, was his match.

"What was the nature of Brian's garment," inquired Nick.

"Why, you know the song," said Bill—

> "Brian O'Lynn had no breeches to wear,
> So he got a sheep's skin for to make him a pair;
> With the fleshy side out, and the woolly side in,
> They'll be pleasant and *cool*, says Brian O'Lynn.

A *cool* pare would sarve you, Nick."

"You're mighty waggish to-day, misther Duffy."

"And good right I have," said Bill; "I'm a man snug and well to do in the world; have lots of money, plenty of good eating and drinking, and what more need a man wish for?"

"True," said the other; "in the meantime it's rather odd that so respectable a man should not have six inches of unbroken cloth in his apparel. You are as naked a tatterdemallion as I ever laid my eyes on; in full dress for a party of scare-crows, William."

"That's my own fancy, Nick; I don't work at my trade like a gentleman. This is my forge dress, you know."

"Well, but what did you summon me here for?" said the other; "you may as well speak out I tell you; for, my good friend, unless *you* do *I* shan't. Smell that."

"I smell more than that," said Bill; "and by the way, I'll thank you to give me the windy side of you—curse all sulphur I say. There, that's what I call an improvement in my condition. But as you *are* so stiff," says Bill, "why, the short and the long of it is—that—hem—you see I'm—tut—sure you

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know I have a thriving trade of my own, and that if I like I needn't be at a loss; but in the manetime I'm rather in a kind of a so—so—don't you *take?*"

And Bill winked knowingly, hoping to trick him into the first proposal.

"You must speak above-board, my friend," says the other; "I'm a man of few words, blunt and honest. If you have any thing to say, be plain. Don't think I can be losing my time with such a pitiful rascal as you are."

"Well," says Bill, "I want money, then, and am ready to come into terms. What have you to say to that, Nick?"

"Let me see—let me look at you," says his companion, turning him about. "Now, Bill, in the first place, are you not as finished a scare-crow as ever stood upon two legs?"

"I play second fiddle to you there again," says Bill.

"There you stand with the blackguard's coat of arms quartered under your eye, and—"

"Don't make little of *black*guards," said Bill," nor spake disparagingly of *your own* crest."

"Why, what would you bring, you brazen rascal, if you were fairly put up at auction?"

"Faith, I'd bring more bidders that you would," said Bill, "if you were to go off at auction to-morrow. I tell you they should bid *downwards* to come to your value, Nicholas. We have no coin *small* enough to purchase you."

"Well, no matter," said Nick, "if you are willing to be mine at the expiration of seven years, I will give you more money than ever the rascally breed of you was worth."

"Done!" said Bill; "but no disparagement to my family, in the meantime; so down with the hard cash, and don't be a *nager*."

The money was accordingly paid down; but as nobody was present, except the giver and receiver, the amount of what Bill got was never known.

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"Won't you give me a luck-penny?" said the old gentleman.

"Tut," said Billy, "so prosperous an old fellow as you cannot want it; however the devil's luck to you, with all my heart! and it's rubbing grease to a fat pig to say so. Be off now, or I'll commit suicide on you. Your absence is a cordial to most people, you infernal old profligate. You have injured my morals even for the short time you have been with me; for I don't find myself so virtuous as I was."

"Is that your gratitude, Billy?"

"Is it gratitude *you* speak of, man? I wonder you don't blush when you name it. However, when you come again, if you bring a third eye in your head, you will see what I mane, Nicholas, ahagur."

The old gentleman, as Bill spoke, hopped across the ditch, on his way to *Downing*-street, where of late 'tis thought he possesses much influence.

Bill now began by degrees to show off; but still wrought a little at his trade to blindfold the neighbours. In a very short time, however, he became a great man. So long indeed as he was a *poor* rascal, no decent person would speak to him; even the proud serving-men at the "Big House" would turn up their noses at him. And he well deserved to be made little of by others, because he was mean enough to make little of himself. But when it was seen and known that he had oceans of money, it was wonderful to think, although he was *now* a greater blackguard than ever, how those who despised him before, began to come round him and court his company. Bill, however, had neither sense nor spirit to make those sunshiny friends know their distance; not he—instead of that he was proud to be seen in decent company, and so long as the money lasted, it was, "hail fellow well met," between himself and every fair-faced *spunger* who had a horse under him, a decent coat to his back, and a good appetite to eat his dinners. With riches and all, Bill was the same man still; but, somehow

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or other, there is a great difference between a rich profligate and a poor one, and Bill found it so to his cost in *both* cases.

Before half the seven years was passed, Bill had his carriage, and his equipages; was hand and glove with my Lord This, and my Lord That; kept hounds and hunters; was the first sportsman at the Curragh; patronized every boxing ruffian he could pick up; and betted night and day on cards, dice, and horses. Bill, in short, *should* be a blood, and except he did all this, he could not presume to mingle with the fashionable bloods of his time.

It's an old proverb, however, that "what is got over the devil's back is sure to go off under it;" and in Bill's case this proved true. In short, the devil himself could not supply him with money so fast as he made it fly; it was "come easy, go easy," with Bill, and so sign was on it, before he came within two years of his time he found his purse empty.

And now came the value of his summer friends to be known. When it was discovered that the cash was no longer flush with him—that stud, and carriage, and hounds were going to the hammer—whish! off they went, friends, relations, pot-companions, dinner-eaters, black-legs and all, like a flock of crows that had smelt gunpowder. Down Bill soon went, week after week, and day after day, until at last, he was obliged to put on the leather apron, and take to the hammer again; and not only that, for as no experience could make him wise, he once more began his tap-room brawls, his quarrels with Judy, and took to his "high feeding" at the dry potatoes and salt. Now, too, came the cutting tongues of all who knew him, like razors upon him. Those that he scorned because they were poor and himself rich, now paid him back his own with interest; and those that he measured himself with, because they were rich, and who only countenanced him in consequence of his wealth, gave him the hardest word in their cheeks. The devil mend him! He deserved it all, and more if he had got it.

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Bill, however, who was a hardened sinner, never fretted himself down an ounce of flesh by what was said to him, or of him. Not he; he cursed, and fought, and swore, and schemed away as usual, taking in every one he could; and surely none could match him at villany of all sorts and sizes.

At last the seven years became expired, and Bill was one morning sitting in his forge, sober and hungry, the wife cursing him, and the childhre squalling, as before; he was thinking how he might defraud some honest neighbour out of a breakfast to stop their mouths and his own too, when who walks in to him but old Nick, to demand his bargain.

"Morrow, Bill!" says he with a sneer.

"The devil welcome you!" says Bill; "but you have a fresh memory."

"A bargain's a bargain between two *honest* men, any day," says Satan; "when I speak of *honest* men, I mean *yourself* and *me*, Bill;" and he put his tongue in his cheek to make game of the unfortunate rogue he had come for.

"Nick, my worthy fellow," said Bill, "have bowels; you wouldn't do a shabby thing; you wouldn't disgrace your own character by putting more weight upon a falling man. You know what it is to get a *come down* yourself, my worthy; so just keep your toe in your pump, and walk off with yourself somewhere else. A *cool* walk will sarve you better than my company, Nicholas."

"Bill, it's no use in shirking;" said his friend, "your swindling tricks may enable you to cheat others, but you won't cheat *me*, I guess. You want nothing to make you perfect in your way but to travel; and travel you shall under my guidance, Billy. No, no—*I'm* not to be swindled, my good fellow. I have rather a—a—better opinion of myself, Mr. D. than to think that you could outwit one Nicholas Clutie, Esq.—ehem!"

"You may sneer, you sinner," replied Bill; "but I tell you for your comfort, that I have outwitted men who could buy

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and sell you to your face. Despair, you villain, when I tell you that *no attorney* could stand before me."

Satan's countenance got blank when he heard this; he wriggled and fidgetted about, and appeared to be not quite comfortable.

"In that case, then," says he, "the sooner I *deceive* you the better; so turn out for the *Low Countries*."

"Is it come to that in earnest?" said Bill, "and are you going to act the rascal at the long run?"

"'Pon honour, Bill."

"Have patience, then, you sinner, till I finish this horse-shoe—it's the last of a set I'm finishing for one of your friend the attorney's horses. And here, Nick, I hate idleness, you know it's the mother of mischief, take this sledge-hammer, and give a dozen strokes or so, till I get it out of hands, and then here's with you, since it must be so."

He then gave the bellows a puff that blew half a peck of dust in Club-foot's face, whipped out the red-hot iron, and set Satan sledging away for the bare life.

"Faith," says Bill to him, when the shoe was finished, "it's a thousand pities ever the sledge should be out of your hand; the great *Parra Gow* was a child to you at sledging, you're such an able tyke. Now just exercise yourself till I bid the wife and childhre good-bye, and then I'm off."

Out went Bill, of course without the slightest notion of coming back; no more than Nick had that he could not give up the sledging, and indeed neither could he, but was forced to work away as if he was sledging for a wager. This was just what Bill wanted. He was now compelled to sledge on until it was Bill's pleasure to release him; and so we leave him very industriously employed, while we look after the worthy who outwitted him.

In the meantime, Bill broke cover, and took to the country at large; wrought a little journey-work wherever he could get

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it, and in this way went from one place to another, till in the course of a month, he walked back very coolly into his own forge, to see how things went on in his absence. There he found Satan in a rage, the perspiration pouring from him in torrents, hammering with might and main upon the naked anvil. Bill calmly leaned his back against the wall, placed his hat upon the side of his head, put his hands into his breeches pockets, and began to whistle *Shaun Gow's* hornpipe. At length he says in a very quiet and good-humoured way—

"Morrow, Nick!"

"Oh!" says Nick, still hammering away—"Oh! you double-distilled villain (hech!), may the most refined, ornamental (hech!), double-rectified, super-extra, and original (hech!) collection of curses that ever was gathered (hech!) into a single nosegay of ill fortune (hech!), shine in the button-hole of your conscience (hech!) while your name is Bill Duffy! I denounce you (hech!) as a double-milled villain, a finished, hot-pressed knave (hech!), in comparison of whom all the other knaves I ever knew (hech!), attorneys included, are honest men. I brand you (hech!) as the pearl of cheats, a tip-top take-in (hech!) I denounce you, I say again, for the villanous treatment (hech!) I have received at your hands in this most untoward (hech!) and unfortunate transaction between us; for (hech!) unfortunate, in every sense, is he that has any thing to do with (hech!) such a prime and finished impostor."

"You're very warm, Nicky," says Bill; "what puts you into a passion, you old sinner? Sure if it's your own will and pleasure to take exercise at my anvil, *I'm* not to be abused for it. Upon my credit, Nicky, you ought to blush for using such blackguard language, so unbecoming your grave character. You cannot say that it was I set you a hammering at the empty anvil, you profligate. However, as you are so industrious, I simply say it would be a thousand pities to take you from it.

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Nick, I love industry in my heart, and I always encourage it; so, work away; it's not often you spend your time so creditably. I'm afraid if you weren't at that you'd be worse employed."

"Bill, have bowels," said the operative; "you wouldn't go to lay more weight on a falling man, you know; you wouldn't disgrace your character by such a piece of iniquity as keeping an inoffensive gentleman, advanced in years, at such an unbecoming and rascally job as this. Generosity 's your top virtue, Bill; not but that you have many other excellent ones, as well as that, among which, as you say yourself, I reckon industry; but still it is in generosity you *shine*. Come, Bill, honour bright, and release me."

"Name the terms, you profligate."

"You're above terms, William; a generous fellow like you never thinks of terms."

"Good bye, old gentleman!" said Bill, very coolly; "I'll drop in to see you once a month."

"No, no, Bill, you infern—a—a— you excellent, worthy, delightful fellow, not so fast; not so fast. Come, name your terms, you sland— my dear Bill, name your terms."

"Seven years more."

"I agree; but ——"

"And the same supply of cash as before, down on the nail here."

"Very good; very good. You're rather simple, Bill; rather soft, I must confess. Well, no matter. I shall yet turn the tab—a—hem? You are an exceedingly simple fellow, Bill; still there will come a day, my *dear* Bill—there will come ——"

"Do you grumble, you vagrant? Another word, and I double the terms."

"Mum, William—mum; *tace* is Latin for a candle."

"Seven years more of grace, and the same measure of the needful that I got before. Ay or no?"

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"Of grace, Bill! Ay! ay! ay! There's the cash. I accept the terms. Oh blood! the rascal—of grace!! Bill!"

"Well, now drop the hammer, and vanish," says Billy; "but what would you think to take this sledge, while you stay, and give me a —— eh! why in such a hurry?" he added, seeing that Satan withdrew in double quick time.

"Hollo! Nicholas!" he shouted, "come back; you forgot something!" and when the old gentleman looked behind him, Billy shook the hammer at him, on which he vanished altogether.

Billy now got into his old courses; and what shows the kind of people the world is made of, he also took up with his old company. When they saw that he had the money once more, and was sowing it about him in all directions, they immediately began to find excuses for his former extravagance.

"Say what you will," said one, "Bill Duffy's a spirited fellow, and bleeds like a prince."

"He's as hospitable a man in his own house, or out of it, as ever lived," said another.

"His only fault is," observed a third, "that he is, if any thing, too generous, and doesn't know the value of money; his fault's on the right side, however."

"He has the spunk in him," said a fourth; "keeps a capital table, prime wines, and a standing welcome for his friends."

"Why," said a fifth, "if he doesn't enjoy his money while he lives, he won't when he's dead; so more power to him, and a wider throat to his purse."

Indeed, the very persons who were cramming themselves at his expense despised him at heart. They knew very well, however, how to take him on the weak side. Praise his generosity, and he would do any thing; call him a man of spirit, and you might fleece him to his face. Sometimes he would toss a purse of guineas to this knave, another to that flatterer, a third to a bully, and a fourth to some broken down rake—

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and all to convince them that *he* was a sterling friend—a man of mettle and liberality. But never was he known to help a virtuous and struggling family—to assist the widow or the fatherless, or to do any other act that was *truly* useful. It is to be supposed the reason of this was, that as he spent it, as most of the world do, in the service of the devil, by whose aid he got it, he was prevented from turning it to a good account. Between you and me, dear reader, there are more persons acting after Bill's fashion in the same world than you dream about.

When his money was out again, his friends played him the same rascally game once more. No sooner did his poverty become plain, than the knaves began to be troubled with small fits of modesty, such as an unwillingness to come to his place when there was no longer any thing to be got there. A kind of virgin bashfulness prevented them from speaking to him when they saw him getting out on the wrong side of his clothes. Many of them would turn away from him in the prettiest and most delicate manner when they thought he wanted to borrow money from them—all for fear of putting him to the blush by asking it. Others again, when they saw him coming towards their houses about dinner hour, would become so confused, from mere gratitude, as to think themselves in another place; and their servants, seized as it were, with the same feeling, would tell Bill that their masters were "not at home."

At length, after travelling the same villanous round as before, Bill was compelled to betake himself, as the last remedy, to the forge; in other words, he found that there is, after all, nothing in this world that a man can rely on so firmly and surely as his own industry. Bill, however, wanted the organ of common sense; for his experience—and it was sharp enough to leave an impression—run off him like water off a duck.

He took to his employment sorely against his grain; but he had now no choice. He must either work or starve, and

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starvation is like a great doctor, nobody tries it till every other remedy fails them. Bill had been twice rich; twice a gentleman among blackguards, but always a blackguard among gentlemen;* for no wealth or acquaintance with decent society could rub the rust of his native vulgarity off him. He was now a common blinking sot in his forge; a drunken bully in the tap-room, cursing and brow-beating every one as well as his wife; boasting of how much money he had spent in his day; swaggering about the high doings he carried on; telling stories about himself and Lord This at the Curragh; the dinners he gave—how much they cost him, and attempting to extort credit upon the strength of his former wealth. He was too ignorant, however, to know that he was publishing his own disgrace, and that it was a mean-spirited thing to be proud of what ought to make him blush through a deal board nine inches thick.

He was one morning industriously engaged in a quarrel with his wife, who, with a three-legged stool in her hand, appeared to mistake his head for his own anvil; he, in the meantime, paid his addresses to her with his leather apron, when who steps in to jog his memory about the little agreement that was between them, but old Nick. The wife, it seems, in spite of all her exertions to the contrary, was getting the worst of it; and Sir Nicholas, willing to appear a gentleman of great gallantry, thought he could not do less than take up the lady's quarrel, particularly as Bill had laid her in a sleeping posture. Now Satan thought this too bad; and as he felt himself under many obligations to the sex, he determined to defend one of them on the present occasion; so as Judy rose, he turned upon the husband, and floored him by a clever facer.

"You unmanly villain," said he, "is this the way you treat you wife? 'Pon honour, Bill, I'll chastise you on the spot. I

* It is almost unnecessary for us to acknowledge the little theft manifest in the above travestie.

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could not stand by a spectator of such ungentlemanly conduct without giving up all claim to gallant——"

Whack! the word was divided in his mouth by the blow of a churn-staff from Judy, who no sooner saw Bill struck, than she nailed Satan, who "fell" once more.

"What, you villain! that's for striking my husband like a murderer behind his back," said Judy, and she suited the action to the word, "that's for interfering between man and wife. Would you murder the poor man before my face? eh? If *he* bates me, you shabby dog you, who has a better right? I'm sure its nothing out of your pocket. Must you have your finger in every pie?"

This was any thing but *idle* talk; for at every word she gave him a remembrance, hot and heavy. Nicholas backed, danced, and hopped; she advanced, still drubbing him with great perseverance, till at length he fell into the redoubtable arm chair, which stood exactly behind him. Bill, who had been putting in two blows for Judy's one, seeing that his enemy was safe, now got between the devil and his wife, *a situation that few will be disposed to envy him.*

"Tenderness, Judy," said the husband, "I hate cruelty. Go put the tongs in the fire, and make them red hot. Nicholas, you have a nose," said he.

Satan began to rise, but was rather surprised to find that he could not budge.

"Nicholas," says Bill, "how is your pulse? you don't look well; that is to say, you look worse than usual."

The other attempted to rise, but found it a mistake.

"I'll thank you to come along," said Bill, "I have a fancy to travel under your guidance, and we'll take the *Low Countries* in our way, won't we? Get to your legs, you sinner; you know a bargain's a bargain between two *honest men*, Nicholas; meaning *yourself* and *me*. Judy, are the tongs hot?"

Satan's face was worth looking at, as he turned his eyes

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from the husband to the wife, and then fastened them on the tongs, now nearly at a furnace heat in the fire, conscious at the same time that he could not move out of the chair.

"Billy," said he, "you won't forget that I rewarded your generosity the last time I saw you, in the way of business."

"Faith, Nicholas, it fails me to remember any generosity I ever showed you. Don't be womanish. I simply want to see what kind of stuff your nose is made of, and whether it will stretch like a rogue's conscience. If it does, we will flatter it up the *chimly* with the red hot tongs, and when this old hat is fixed on the top of it, let us alone for a weather-cock."

"Have a *fellow-feeling*, Mr. Duffy; you know *we* ought not to dispute. Drop the matter, and I give you the next seven years."

"We know all that," says Billy opening the red hot tongs very coolly."

"Mr. Duffy," said Satan, "if you cannot remember my friendship to yourself, don't forget how often I stood your father's friend, your grandfather's friend, and the friend of all your relations up to the tenth generation. I intended, also, to stand by your children after you, so long as the name of Duffy, and a respectable one it is, might last."

"Don't be blushing, Nick," says Bill, "you are too modest; that was ever your failing; hould up your head, there's money bid for you, I'll give you such a nose, my good friend, that you will have to keep an outrider before you, to carry the end of it on his shoulder."

"Mr. Duffy, I pledge my honour to raise your children in the world as high as they can go; no matter whether they desire it or not."

"That's very kind of you," says the other, "and I'll do as much for your nose."

He gripped it as he spoke, and the old boy immediately sung out; Bill pulled, and the nose went with him like a piece

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of warm wax. He then transferred the tongs to Judy, got a ladder, resumed the tongs, ascended the chimney, and tugged stoutly at the nose until he got it five feet above the roof.—He then fixed the hat upon the top of it, and came down.

"There's a weather-cock," said Billy; "I defy Ireland to show such a beauty. Faith, Nick, it would make the purtiest steeple for a church, in all Europe, and the old hat fits it to a shaving."

In this state, with his nose twisted up the chimney, Satan sat for some time, experiencing the novelty of what might be termed a peculiar sensation. At last the worthy husband and wife began to relent:

"I think," said Bill, "that we have made the most of the nose, as well as the joke; I believe, Judy, it's long enough."

"What is?" says Judy.

"Why, the joke," said the husband.

"Faith, and I think so is the nose," said Judy.

"What do you say yourself, Satan?" said Bill.

"Nothing at all, William," said the other; "but that—ha! ha!—it's a good joke—an excellent joke, and a goodly nose. too, as it *stands*. You were always a gentlemanly man, Bill, and did things with a grace; still, if I might give an opinion on such a trifle—"

"It's no trifle at all," says Bill, "if you spake of the nose."

"Very well, it is not," says the other; "still, I am decidedly of opinion, that if you could shorten both the joke and the nose without further violence, you would lay me under very heavy obligations, which I shall be ready to acknowledge and *repay* as I ought."

"Come," said Bill, "shell out once more, and be off for seven years. As much as you came down with the last time, and vanish."

The words were scarcely spoken, when the money was at his feet, and Satan invisible. Nothing could surpass the

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mirth of Bill and his wife, at the result of this adventure. They laughed till they fell down on the floor.

It is useless to go over the same ground again. Bill was still incorrigible. The money went as the devil's money always goes. Bill caroused and squandered, but could never turn a penny of it to a good purpose. In this way, year after year went, till the seventh was closed, and Bill's hour come. He was now, and had been for some time past, as miserable a knave as ever. Not a shilling had he, nor a shilling's worth, with the exception of his forge, his cabin, and a few articles of crazy furniture. In this state he was standing in his forge as before, straining his ingenuity how to make out a breakfast, when Satan came to look after him.

The old gentleman was sorely puzzled how to get at him. He kept skulking and sneaking about the forge for some time, till he saw that Bill hadn't a cross to bless himself with. He immediately changed himself into a guinea, and lay in an open place where he knew Bill would see him.

"If," said he, "I get once into his possession, I can manage him."

The honest smith took the bait, for it was well gilded, he clutched the guinea, put it into his purse, and closed it up.

"Ho! ho!" shouted the devil out of the purse, "you're caught, Bill; I've secured you at last, you knave you. Why don't you despair, you villain, when you think of what's before you."

"Why you unlucky ould dog," said Bill, "is it there you are? will you always drive your head into every loop-hole that's set for you? Faith, Nick achora, I never had you bagged till now."

Satan then began to swell and tug and struggle with a view of getting out of the purse, but in vain. He found himself fast, and perceived that he was once more in Bill's power.

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"Mr. Duffy," said he, "we understand each other. I'll give the seven years additional, and the cash on the nail."

"Be aisey, Nicholas. You know the weight of the hammer, that 's enough. It 's not a whipping with feathers you're going to get, anyhow. Just be aisey."

"Mr. Duffy, I grant I'm not your match. Release me, and I double the cash. I was merely trying your temper when I took the shape of a guinea."

"Faith and I'll try your's before you lave it, I've a notion."

He immediately commenced with the sledge, and Satan sang out with a considerable want of firmness.

"Am I heavy enough?" said Bill.

"Lighter, lighter, William, if you love me. I haven't been well, latterly, Mr. Duffy—I have been delicate—my health, in short, is in a very precarious state, Mr. Duffy."

"I can believe *that*," said Bill, "and it will be more so before I have done with you. Am I doing it right?"

"Beautifully, William; but a little of the heaviest; strike me light, Bill, my head's tender.—Oh!"

"Heads or tails, my old boy," exclaimed the other; "I don't care which; it's all the same to me what side of you is up—but here goes to help the impression—hach!"

"Bill," said Nicholas, "is this gentlemanly treatment in your own respectable shop? Do you think, if you dropped into my little place, that I'd act this rascally part towards you? Have you no compunction?"

"I know," replied Bill, sledging away with vehemence, "that you're notorious for giving your friends a *warm* welcome. Divil an ould youth more so; but you must be daling in bad coin, must you? However, good or bad, you're in for a sweat now, you sinner. Am I doin' it purty?"

"Lovely, William—but, if possible, a little more delicate."

"Oh, how delicate you are! Maybe a cup o' tay would sarve you, or a little small gruel to compose your stomach."

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"Mr. Duffy," said the gentleman in the purse, "hold your hand, and let us understand one another. I have a proposal to make."

"Hear the sinner, anyhow," said the wife.

"Name your own sum," said Satan, "only set me free."

"No, the sorra may take the toe you'll budge till you let Bill off," said the wife; "hould him hard, Bill, barrin' he sets *you* clear of your engagement."

"There it is, my posey," said Bill; "that's the condition. If you don't give *me up*, here's at you once more—and you must double the cash you gave the last time, too. So, if you're of that opinion, say *ay*—leave the cash, and be off."

"Oh, murder;" groaned the old one, "am I to be done by an Irish spalpeen! I who was never done before."

"Keep a mannerly tongue in your head, Nick," said Bill; "if you're not *done* by this time you must be the divil's *tough morsel*, for I'm sure you're long enough *at the fire*, you villain. Do you agree to the terms?"

"Ay, ay," replied the other, "let me out—and I hope I have done with you."

The money again immediately appeared in a glittering heap before Bill, upon which he exclaimed—

"The *ay* has it, you dog. Take to your pumps now, and fair weather after you, you vagrant; but Nicholas—Nick—here—here—"

The other looked back, and saw Bill, with a broad grin upon him, shaking the purse at him—"Nicholas, come back," said he, "I'm short a guinea."

The other shook his fist in return, and shouted out, looking over his shoulder as he spoke, but not stopping—

"Oh, you superlative villain, keep from me—I wish to have done with you—and all I hope is, that I'll never meet you either here or hereafter." So saying, he disappeared.

It would be useless to stop now, merely to inform our readers

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that Billl was beyond improvement. In short, he once more took to his old habits, and lived on exactly in the same manner as before. He had two sons—one as great a blackguard as himself, and who was also named after him; the other was a well-conducted, virtuous young man, called James, who left his father, and having relied upon his own industry and honest perseverance in life, arrived afterwards to great wealth, and built the town called Bally James Duff, which is so called from its founder until this day.

Bill, at length, in spite of all his wealth, was obliged, as he himself said, "to travel,"—in other words, he fell asleep one day, and forgot to awaken; or, in still plainer terms, he died.

Now, it is usual, when a man dies, to close the history of his life and adventures at once; but with our hero this cannot be the case. The moment Bill departed, he very naturally bent his steps towards the residence of St. Moroky, as being, in his opinion, likely to lead him towards the snuggest berth he could readily make out. On arriving he gave a very humble kind of a knock, and St. Moroky appeared.

"God save your Reverence!" said Bill, very submissively.

"Be off: there's no admittance here for so pure a youth as you are," said St. Moroky.

He was now so cold and fatigued that he cared little where he went, provided only, as he said himself, "he could rest his bones, and get an air of the fire." Accordingly, after arriving at a large black gate, he knocked, as before, and was told he would get *instant* admittance the moment he gave his name, in order that they might find out his berth from the registry, taking it for granted that he had been booked for them, as is usual in such cases.

"I think your master is acquainted with me," said Billy.

"If he were not, you'd not come here," said the porter; "there are no friendly visits made to us. What's your name?"

"Billy Duffy," he replied.

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The porter and several of his companions gave a yell of terror, such as Bill had never heard before, and immediately every bolt was bolted, every chain drawn tight across the gate, and every available weight and bar placed against it, as if those who were inside dreaded a siege.

"Off, instantly," said the porter, "and let his Majesty know that the rascal he dreads so much is here at the gate."

In fact, such a racket and tumult were never heard as the very mention of Billy Duffy created among them.

"Oh," said Bill, with his eye to the bars of the gate, "I doubt I have got a bad name," and he shook his head like an innocent man who did not deserve it.

In the meantime, his old acquaintance came running towards the gate with such haste and consternation, that his tail was several times nearly tripping up his heels.

"Don't admit that rascal," he shouted; "bar the gate—make every chain, and lock, and bolt, fast—I won't be safe—none of us will be safe—and I won't stay here, nor none of us need stay here, if he gets in—my bones are sore yet after him. No, no—begone you villain—you'll get no entrance here—I know you too well."

Bill could not help giving a broad, malicious grin at Satan, and, putting his nose through the bars, he exclaimed—

"Ha! you ould dog, I have you afraid of me at last, have I?"

He had scarcely uttered the words, when his foe, who stood inside, instantly tweaked him by the nose, and Bill felt as if he had been gripped by the same red-hot tongs with which he himself had formerly tweaked the nose of Nicholas.

"Well," said he, "that's not the way *I* treated *you* once upon a time. Throth you're ondecent—but you know what it is to get tinker's reckoning—to be paid in advance—so I owe you nothing for *that*, Nicholas."

Bill then departed, but soon found that in consequence of

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the inflammable materials which strong drink had thrown into his nose, that organ immediately took fire, and, indeed, to tell the truth, kept burning night and day, winter and summer, without ever once going out, from that hour to this.

Such was the sad fate of Billy Duffy, who has been walking without stop or stay, from place to place ever since; and in consequence of the flame on his nose, and his beard being tangled like a wisp of hay, he has been christened by the country folk Will-o'-the-Wisp, while, as it were, to show the mischief of his disposition, the circulating knave, knowing that he must seek the coldest bogs and quagmires in order to cool his nose, seizes upon that opportunity of misleading the unthinking and tipsy night travellers from their way, just that he may have the satisfaction of still taking in as many as possible.

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THE IRISH RAKE.

The character of an Irish Rake is one which has not, to my knowledge at least, ever been yet properly described,—a circumstance which can only be accounted for by the difficulty probably of blending so many antithetical traits of temper, and modes of life, into one harmonious picture. The Irish Rake may, indeed, be said to contain within himself the various eccentricities which the wide field of society presents for observation. Many a single point of character, for instance, exists in other individuals sufficiently marked and predominant in its own nature to constitute their moral and social individuality; but of these single traits, collected as it were from a vast number of eccentric men, sufficient as each of them is to make but one person, the whole being of the rake is composed. In plainer words, all that makes other men remarkable meets in him. He is a kind of Proteus, whose facility of changing his shape constitutes his uniformity. Go where you will, he is sure to be there before you in a new aspect. Like the air, he is every where; and among the young of both sexes there is no breathing without him. Every one knows him, and he knows every one. He can tell you, as if by intuition, the name of the farmer's wife in the parish who was last confined, and whether her little one was a boy or a girl. No earthly fun or frolic can go on properly unless he conducts it. The fellow appears to possess the power of multiplying his person, and of being, for the good of his fellow-creatures, in several places at the same time. If two fairs occur in neighbouring parishes, he

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will certainly be present at both. He is, in fact, a kind of wandering Jew upon a small scale; for although you find him in every possible direction you turn, yet no one knows how or when he conveys himself from place to place. At christening, wake, wedding, funeral—at fair, at market—in the faction and party fight—at mass, at patterns, at places of pilgrimage—at cock-fights—bull-baitings, when they existed—cudgel-matches, harvests' home—at the *brooish**; in short, never did such an ubiquitarian exist as the Irish rake, who, as the fellow says in the play, is a perfect here-and-thereian, a stranger no where.

Of the rake's parentage and means of living no one can tell. Perhaps, indeed, once in seven years a grey-headed beggar will inform you that he remembers his father and mother, who lived in a distant county; that they have been long dead, and that he had a brother hanged in the time of the *throuble*. The hoary senachie will, probably, go on to say that he also remembers the rake's marriage, when he was not more than sixteen, to a pretty creature not older than himself, that he took away from her parents, up in such a place.

"She is still alive," he will say; "but the marriage didn't turn out well, for they lived but a short time together."

The rake is always well dressed, and sets the fashion to all the districts through which he passes. He is, in fact, a Beau Brummel in his way—a wit, a wag, and the most accomplished man in all rural sports and pastimes. Nor is he ever without money; for no man is more willing to stand his treat, as the phrase is, than he: nay, he will often lend to others. But his system always is, to borrow thrice the sum from the person he obliged, and never to repay it. This, however, is not all his means of support; for, with shame and sorrow I say it, both on his account and theirs, he contrives, in a sense any thing but metaphorical, to constitute himself a heavy debtor to the

* What the Scotch call the *Infare*—i. e. the hauling home of a wife.

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softer sex. In all love affairs, his first principles are swayed by the cup-board; but he contrives to take care that they shall not end there. Like consumption, of which he is a healthy representative, he eats his way into their hearts; and what can be expected afterwards but that which usually follows? He is the only man that can borrow money from servant maids with a grace; but it has never been known that he consented to call a meeting of his creditors, which probably arose from the consciousness of the utter improbability that they could agree.

No one has ever seen him carrying a bundle of any kind, such as might contain a change of linen, yet has it been observed that his shirt is at all times well washed, neatly made up, and remarkable for its whiteness. This, however, is another mystery between himself and the other sex, which it is not within my power to fathom.

As a gamester, he stands unrivalled, no man being a match for him at spoil-five or five-and-ten, which games he good naturedly teaches to all "the slips of boys" in the parish, each of whom feels great pride in boasting of his instructor.

In addition to all this, the rake finds it necessary to be accomplished, and he accordingly whistles like a flute; and often, of a winter's night or summer's evening, the young country folk find him a tolerably good substitute for a fiddler. He also performs on a pair of trumps, *i. e.* Jews'-harps, with both fingers—and plays with great skill on an ivy-leaf,—a comb,—or a weaver's reed, through which he blows in a manner wonderfully melodious. He is also the terror of dancing-masters, whom he never fails to challenge and overcome in the presence of their own scholars; and were it not that to suffer defeat by a performer of such consummate skill can scarcely be termed disgraceful—it being possible for many grades of excellence to exist beneath his,—they would feel it necessary to remove out of his range, if such a thing were practicable.

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The rake frequently expresses strong intentions to comply with the solicitations of his admirers, and set up a dancing-school for himself. This, however, he ultimately declines, knowing, from his habits of transition and locomotion, that such an active employment would necessarily keep him much too stationary.

The rake is also a devoted ribbonman; and this, indeed, of all his accomplishments, is the worst, and most subversive of the peace of the country. Did he not become a propagator of that bad system, his foibles and vices, all considered, could amount, after all, to nothing more than the foibles and vices of a private, low-bred vagabond. But here he absolutely becomes a public character, gifted with the evil power of corrupting the subjects of his sovereign, and of seducing them into the guilty secrets of ribbonism, by their participation in which they not only tie up the hands and diminish the efforts of those who would serve them, but they are, in hundreds of instances, goaded or entrapped into crimes of the blackest die; and are thus led, step by step, and by the cruel tyranny of the system, to an ignominious death, with the bitter reflection, that, instead of having served either their church or their country, they have, in addition to their own punishment, brought sorrow, and ruin, and misery, and shame upon their own families. As a cunning and selfish propagator, therefore, of principles every way so pernicious, the Irish rake is not only a curse to the hundreds whom he corrupts, but a public curse to the country.

No human being knows the cut of a constable better than he does; for in consequence of his tendency to fighting, that worthy, and many of his class, are seldom, if ever, without having in their possession a certain document for his especial use, regularly sworn before a neighbouring magistrate by a man having his head bound up in a red spotted cotton handkerchief, the property of his wife. Connected with this, the rake is found to be very useful in fairs and markets for beat-

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ing or waylaying individuals, who may happen to be obnoxious to his friends, and by whom their persons would be known, if they undertook the task which the rake kindly performs. To give him a treat is all that is necessary; for of the rake it is but just to say, that in such matters, he is by no means mercenary.

The constable, however, is not the only person by whom he is anxious to be met. The truth is, he seldom remains long in a neighbourhood or parish, until some disconsolate young woman, with a child in her arms, comes to seek him out. It always happens, however, that he has left the place about two days before her arrival, and no one can tell to what part of the country he went. She then relates to some honest farmer, or farmer's wife, a doleful story of how her little hoard of money was first lent to the rake, and of the ungrateful return she received for her kindness, winding up all by a sorrowful picture of her present destitution. She then looks with a breaking heart upon her babe, bursts into a fit of weeping, and, after having satisfied her hunger through the kindness of the good woman, departs—a miserable and care-worn picture of foolish credulity and trust betrayed.

The rake is also a kind of doctor in his way, and knows the use of cut-finger, robin-run-the-hedge, buglass, ground-ivy, and house-leek, better than any old woman in the country. Nor is he ever without a certain cure for the tooth-ache, or cholic; nay, he can not only tell when "the spool o' the breast is down,"—a common complaint, it is said, among young girls in the country,—but he can also raise it by a little burnt spirits, a tumbler, and half-a-crown judiciously placed upon the seat of the disease; so as by the miraculous power of the tumbler and spirits absolutely to raise the heart of the sufferer.

There is always one person, in whatsoever parish he may reside for the time, with whom he never wishes to come on speaking terms—and that is the priest, between whom and himself there is at all times a standing enmity. So many

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complaints against him are usually laid before the pastor, that his reverence feels it to be his duty to put his parishioners on their guard against his arts. Such, however, is the indomitable fund of spirits by which the rake is characterized, and so easy and good-humoured is his swagger, that his countenance, beaming, as it usually does, with mirth and frolic, renders it impossible for any one to carry the good Father's censure into execution.

The people, in fact, cannot look upon any thing the rake either says or does in a serious light; and as he is himself quite sensible of this, so do his powers of humour and his natural wit increase and appear to the best advantage, by the confidence that there is no possibility of his failing, and that whatever he intends to be considered as humour, whether in word or action, will be laughed at, whether it may possess that quality or not.

Another quality for which this character is remarkable, we cannot pass over in silence. There never, probably, has been an instance known of the rake exhibiting any degree, however slight, of parental attachment to his offspring, whether legitimate or otherwise; he pays them no more attention than if they were not his. 'Tis true, he will speak to them with as light a heart and as pleasant a familiarity as he would to the children of his neighbours; but this comprises all the solicitude he ever feels about them. Neither advice nor aid do they experience, even under the most pressing difficulty, at his hands; but on the contrary, if any of them should happen to get together, by their industry and labour, a few shillings, or it may be pounds, the rake never ceases until he wheedles it out of their hands, and leaves them to struggle on in new difficulties, whilst he, as usual, rolicks and roves it away through life; his laugh as loud and his joke as ready at these frolicsome frauds upon his own children, as if he had practised them upon strangers, or rendered them a service.

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The rake's end is also in complete keeping with the life of a man of whom every body speaks much, and after all knows little. He is always secretive, and feels no inclination, unless you should hear it from another channel, to let you or any one else know where he was born, who was his father, and stoutly denies that his brother was hanged; for the rake, be it known, wishes to pass himself off as a man of consequence among the females. This causes him to affect mystery, which more or less cleaves to him wherever he goes; as, indeed, is but natural in the case of one who, like him, lives at the same time every where and no where. In accordance with this, it is found that, although the rake may disappear, he is never known to die, even by his most intimate acquaintances. A rake's death, in fact, is as rare an event as a dead ass, or a tinker's funeral. A space of time elapses longer than that in which he has been accustomed to re-appear—he is expected by the unthinking for a while, but he comes not again; and thus does he pass away, few knowing how, when, or where he died, or in what part of the world the bones of this rustic but humourous profligate lie interred.

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STORIES

OF

SECOND-SIGHT AND APPARITION.

I BEG to assure my readers that I am neither superstitious nor visionary on the subject of dreams or apparitions, but on the contrary, little disposed to place reliance on them, if not well authenticated. The difficulty certainly rests in the means of proof; but I would no more reject one history of a genuine apparition, because ninety-nine tales of deliberate imposture have been foisted upon human credulity, than I would refuse to give charity, upon the heartless principle that out of one hundred miserable mendicants, ninety-nine of them may be impostors. I would look with scorn upon the man who could refuse to assist even an impostor, when in a state of destitution and distress. With nearly a similar feeling would I contemplate your pompous philosophical rascals, who have neither the grace nor imagination to put faith in a good ghost story, whether it be authenticated or not. Such men, be assured of it, are infidels in more points than ghost-ship. I myself, as I have already said, am not superstitious, except where I have good grounds for being so; but, nevertheless, I never will be the man who would keep faith with such heretics on any subject. They are for reducing every kind of spirits to proof, and if you offer them a glass of weak whiskey punch, the fellows refuse to swallow it, until it be rendered perfectly philosophical by the addition of another glass, to give it, what they have not—consistency. They will hear of apparition after apparition, and drink tumbler after tumbler; but I could never

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observe that a round dozen of either one or t'other made any impression on their brain. In these cases they usually have the assurance to walk home sober and unconvinced. Such fellows are great sticklers for mechanics, and love all kinds of machinery but the supernatural. They never read poetry—or if they do, it is only to see where the logic lies, like the worthy man who, after perusing Virgil with great attention, sapiently closed the book and exclaimed—"All very well, language grammatical and accurate enough; but what does it *prove?*" These men make excellent Fellows of Colleges, and are remarkable for bearing especially choice matter-of-fact faces. Let one of them hear of a patent invention for opening oysters or darning stockings, and he immediately boasts the advantages of mechanical science. They have excellent appetites, too, for every thing but that which is supernatural; love Monsieur Ude, and the transcendental philosophy, and are deeply devoted to more tables than the logarithmal. Some of them will undertake to resolve you the miracles of the Bible by the aid of German philosophy, concluding that because they cannot understand the philosophy, they ought not to believe the miracles. You might as well pull one of them by the nose as mention witchcraft seriously in his presence—indeed, better; for they bear the pull with much more patience than they do the witchcraft. They conclude, too, that because they are no conjurers themselves, there never must have been such persons in the world. In fact, they have usually a great deal of the sheep in them, especially after dinner; and any man who has had an opportunity of seeing them grapple with a leg of mutton, will easily believe me. One of this class reminds me of a turtle; being slow, fat, heavy, and contented under the shell of ignorance and unbelief which covers him; and, truly, I have seen them, when dressed and cut up, afford a very rich repast at several tables of my acquaintances. In Bracebridge-hall, the fat-headed gentleman who, like a slow-hound, eternally pursued

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the same joke against Master Simon, was one of these ungodly Saducees, differing widely from the thin-faced, lively little gentleman so fond of the supernatural, and whose head on one side had a delapidated look, like the haunted wing of an old mansion long abandoned by the family. Oh, what a luxury to sit on the haunted side of the little fellow's head, and come down with a history of the murderer who was discovered by the spirit of his sweetheart, and prosecuted by her, after seven years, in a court of justice. "It was one murky night, in the middle of December, the tempest howled along the sky, like a Whig cabinet leaving office; the thunder, sir, was of the choicest description, and the lightning peculiarly brilliant—" Tut! Excuse me, gentle reader—I was about to disclose the murder to the little fellow, who, I am certain, is dreadfully disappointed. I have seen men, however, who were of far stronger faith in the supernatural than he. Poor Shamus Ewh! Commend me, after all, to a man who, like him, was haunted on *both* sides of his head. Nay, for the matter of that, his head was the sepulchral monument of half the parish; his eye, by the mere dint of faith in his own stories, had become cold and rayless; his face was worn away into the hue and hardness of a tombstone, that apparently wanted only the inscription; and as for his voice, nothing could be more decidedly apparitional. He was also afflicted with what is called a church-yard cough—but that made an excellent accompaniment to his narratives. Indeed Shamus, owing to the force of his own imagination, and the fact of his having had a leg and thigh buried in the grave of his predecessors, was frequently at a loss to know whether he should class himself with the living or the dead. Sometimes, it is said, he used to identify himself with his own ghost for the time being, and mentioned himself and the hero of his story by the epithet *we*.

They may talk about the invisibility of spirits; but I deny that doctrine, and bring forward Shamus to disprove it. The

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truth is, no ghost could escape him: if there was one at all any where secreted in the neighbourhood, Shamus detected it, and immediately informed the whole parish. As sure as you became acquainted with him, so certain was he to see your fetch in a fortnight. Shamus, in fact, had not only the gift of second-sight, but of third sight, or fourth sight, if I may say so. Fairies, fetches, banshees, lianhanshees, will-o'-the-wisps, death-watches, white women, black men, and all the variety of the genuine supernatural, were familiar to him. No man living was so well acquainted with the other world, and with good reason; for he spent as much, and more of his time in it than he did in this. Some young wags in the village wanted Shamus to get a tombstone placed over his leg and thigh, to the expense of which they offered to contribute. For some time he refused to embrace the proposal, but at length he was pressed into compliance. The tombstone was got, and the following epitaph furnished to Shamus by an imp of a schoolboy who owed him many supernatural obligations:—

Underneath this marble stone,
[*The villain! it was common limestone.*]
Lies Shamus Ewh, ochone! ochone!
Except a single leg and thigh,
And all the rest of his body.

Poor Shamus! he appears before me this moment; but whether living or dead is a point as doubtful to me as it often was to himself. God bless your coffin-face, Shamus! It is longer I think than usual, and I very much fear that you have hopped to the grave, where you became a more perfect man than you had been for many a long year out of it. If you *be* dead, Shamus, I take it as an unfriendly thing in you, who were my old senachie, not to have come and informed me of the time and manner of your death. That at least was due to *me*.

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There are men, indeed, whom it would be a species of small infidelity to doubt on any subject. I allude especially to your adroit and imperturbable liars; yet it is amazing to think with what irreverence they are treated by the dull portion of society. I would rather, for my own part, smell my dinner through the bars of a tavern railing, in company with an able, fluent liar, than eat venison and drink champagne with a plodding villain, who speaks as solemnly as if he were giving evidence on a case of life and death in a court of justice. If there be a purgatorial settlement on this earth, it is to be planted at the elbow of such a person. Like the eel mentioned by the naturalists, he *torpedizes* those whom he touches; for he is not only dull himself, but the fruitful cause of dulness in others. A glance from his bullet, doltish eye, comes about you with something like the comfort of a wet blanket in December. Enter into a contest with him, and in five minutes you will not know on what side of the question you are disputing; neither will he. All the embellishments of conversation, which I hold to be pure lying, he is wicked enough to lop off. The man has no more poetry in him than a black-pudding; is a most disagreeable companion, and only fit for death-bed conversations, or sifting evidence at a coroner's inquest. Yet, notwithstanding the power he possesses of communicating his torpor to others, I am bound to state that I never knew him to succeed in quashing, or in the slightest degree affecting, by his dulness, the genuine and oily liar. No; that respectable character always rises above all opposition, and indeed thrives in fiction the better for it. The original lie is always outstripped by that which he tells to defend it. Your thorough liar, be it understood, is never malignant—never slanders or defames. On the contrary, he is benevolent, and sometimes, by the dint of lying, succeeds in reconciling enemies who would otherwise never meet each other with good temper or kindness. Then his lies are always of such a description that they cannot be contra-

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dicted even by those who feel that every word is invention. These men are ornaments to convivial society, and possess a power analogous to that which is ascribed to fairies. Where a story from a common man appears nothing but a rude and ragged cave or a barren rock—they, by anointing your eyes with the oil of fiction, present it to you as a lordly palace, bedecked with light, beauty, and magnificence.

The most inimitable of this class that I ever had the luxury of meeting, was the late George M—ds, Esq. George was the Walter Scott of the convivial table. In fact, I never knew a man who could lie with such grace, ease, and dignity. He, too, never told a lie to injure mortal. George could give you a romance in the style of Ivanhoe, in which he himself always bore a leading part; or relate a fashionable novel of the New Burlington-street school, with surpassing effect. The history of his hunting feats, and an enumeration of the immense sums he won at play, are the best things of their kind extant. If he won a thousand pounds, for instance, it was certain to be a thousand pounds, thirteen and five-pence three farthings; thus always introducing the broken money in order to preserve the keeping, and to show you that the circumstances must have happened. How else could he have remembered them so minutely? The man, however, who wished to hear George in all his glory, should have been present when he began to give *his* account of the Irish rebellion of '98, which he was well acquainted with from personal knowledge. Never have I heard any thing in the way of historical narrative, either on or off paper, at all to be compared to it in brilliancy and power. One inference, too, might have been clearly and justly drawn from it by the audience, which was, that the government must have treated him badly, shamefully, and with base ingratitude; because, in point of fact, had it not been for George, the whole fortune of the campaign in that sad business would have gone against the loyalists. Then George's

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manner of relating his adventures was always equal, if not superior, to the matter. *Materiem superabat opus.* There he sat, his thread-bare face and lively dark eyes beaming with something between an expression of complacency and a positive smile, both probably produced by the novelty of his facts and imagery, which, though described as having come within his personal knowledge, had, on the contrary, all been created at the moment. No fiction ever flowed on more freely or unobstructed. There was no putting him out of story or out of countenance. Indeed so much had his narratives the air and consistency of truth, that I have known men, who prided themselves very much on their penetration, to have often been taken in by them. Not the worst thing about George was his readiness to charge several of his friends with invention. One in particular he nicknamed "lying Alick," but upon perfectly fair grounds. 'Tis true, Alick was what a punster is to a wit, when compared with George himself. He was happy at a short monosyllabic lie, could invent a single fact at one flight; but his wing soon tired, and down he came, until he gathered himself again, and concocted another small incident, in which no earthly being, except the narrator, could feel any concern. If you met Alick, for instance, he would tell you that he had just lunched with my Lord O'N——, and was asked to dine with him to-morrow. This was a lie.

Poor George was, notwithstanding his happiness at fiction, an inoffensive, honest man, who in the intercourse of life, but especially in the practical transactions of business, was strictly bound by truth. To be sure, he had one failing, but that was more than overbalanced by his talent at lying:—he gave cursedly bad suppers. Of this I am myself a living proof; and never will the man who gives bad suppers receive indulgence at my hands:—but what was worse, a good glass of whiskey punch I never drank at his table. 'Tis true, I might overlook the indifferent supper, but the bad punch—never. On

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both these subjects, I often remonstrated with him, in a manner so earnest, that it must have showed him the deep interest I took in his reformation. George's standing supper was cockles, of which he was barefaced enough to serve up five courses! Now, I ask, who could stand *that?* Cockles, I grant, are very good in their place; but on George's table no such thing as a decent cockle ever made its appearance. The fact was, that the children and servants always picked out the cocks below stairs; and when you sat down, it soon became evident that you were digging in vain among a magnificent pile of empty shells. This was monstrous and deserved exposure. To a man like me, who am no conchologist, and love a good supper, it was altogether a bitter disappointment. George, when about forty-five, joined a debating society that had been got up by a set of young fellows who were anxious to improve themselves in oratory. He was, of course, admitted by acclamation, having been well known to most of them. The first night on which he spoke, I was present by his express invitation. They voted him into the chair; after which he arose and said—"In rising up, Mister Chairman, to express without fear, favour, or affection——" Having proceeded thus far, he was greeted with a "hear, hear," by some one in the corner of the room. George turned hastily about, and shouted, with something of alarm, *where, where?* In a moment all present were in convulsions, and George resumed his speech, still addressing Mr. Chairman, as if he himself had not presided. It was, however, a vile effort—that is the truth. Indeed he felt it to be such; for after pursuing his own meaning through a multiplicity of empty words, as if he had been hunting a stray cockle through a dish of unprofitable shells, he exclaimed —"Gentlemen, eloquence is ousted—but no matter—I'll sit down, and give you the rebellion." He accordingly took his seat; and from the moment he got on his regimentals until he overthrew the rebels, his audience were bound as if by the

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spell of an enchanter. Poor George! He died after a surfeit of cockles, eaten in town whilst his family were out at his country residence, Cockle Lodge. He made lying Alick his executor. In a little church-yard beside the "Lodge," he now lies buried; and what is not inappropriate, considering his character, an old sun-dial stands beside his grave, which, to tell the truth, is as great a liar as he was, for it never points to the right hour. A friend of mine was requested to write his epitaph, who, thinking it a pity that such talents should pass into obscurity, suggested a simple motto as a hint to his survivors—*De mortuis nil nisi* VERUM. This hint was taken; but the motto was rather a stumbling-block to the illiterate, although I myself am of opinion that all epitaphs ought to be written in a *dead* language. The following was added about a year after his death:—

Here lies
GEORGE M——DS,
(no common dust,)
of whom,
Although he died of a cockle-surfeit,
It is but just to state,
For the benefit of those who may come after him,
That he was unrivalled at
INVENTING TRUTH.

This, to be sure, was rather disguising his talents than openly rescuing them from obliv——Hilloa, our fancy! Easy gentle reader; what is all this twaddle about? I set out with something relative to ghosts, and here I find myself describing men who were talented at conversational fiction. The two subjects have certainly no connexion, as I will prove, if you can muster patience enough to hear me. Away then, levity; I give you to the winds. Hush! hush! let me compose myself. I am now returning to a subject which lies on my heart in spite of the world, unfeeling as it is, with a solemn tenderness that

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touches it at once into happiness and sorrow. I go back to the scenes of my youth, to my native hills and glens, to the mountains and the lakes, and the precipices, which turn my memory into one dreamy landscape, chequered by the clouds and sunshine of joy and tears. Why is it that the heart melts and the eye fills, when we think of our early home? Why is it that every dell, and shaw, and streamlet, how inconsiderable soever they may be in reality, draw back our hearts to them with a power so delightful and so melancholy? Simply because they possessed our first affections. They were the earliest objects on which our young spirits poured themselves forth. Our hearts grew into them, and the soul mourns for that which was dear to her. A friend, a brother, a sister, may assume a new character calculated to sever hearts that had been knit, one would think, never to be disunited. The mountains, however, of our native place cannot change, the river that wimples through the hazel glen cannot offend us; the broomy knoll is guiltless of a crime against the boy who sported and was joyful on it. We naturally love that which has made us happy, whether it be a man or a mountain, and we love that best which first won us to enjoyment.

The littly story I am now about to relate, concerning second-sight, is connected with the scenes of my early boyhood. The facts were precisely as I shall detail them, and I beg that the reader will do me the favour to dismiss all scepticism touching the truth of an occurrence which I am able to explain by no other theory than that of second-sight. It occurred in the month of April. I, my brother, and seven or eight of our young acquaintances, were playing at the game of Wide-windows, which being one of pursuit, requires fleetness of foot. The field in which we played was part of a large sheep-walk belonging to a respectable farmer named M'Crea. It was one of those level *holmes* that usually stretch along the margin of a river, as this in fact did. Around us swelled the smooth

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hills, lying in the fresh verdure of spring, covered here and there by flocks of sheep whose lambs frisked and gamboled in wanton mirth—now running in flighty circles around their dams, then starting off in mad little excursions, performed at the top of their speed, and instantly returning again, their swiftness increasing as they approached the mamma, thinking that they had actually performed something for the world to wonder at: the poor, foolish, old sheep, too, who was evidently of the same opinion, blessing her stars, all the while, that there was not such another lamb in the universe; but mothers are mostly fools in this respect. The evening was an evening which I have never seen equalled from that day to this. In fact how it strayed to our climate I know not; it certainly did not belong to this country. A man should travel to Italy or the south of France to get a glimpse of such an evening, and it would be well worth his while to trudge it every step, for the express purpose. I myself have been through Italy, France, Spain, resided at Constantinople for three years, supped on Mount Lebanon, came round with a sweep to Bagdat, where I challenged and killed three Cadis for abusing Dan O'Connell behind his back; escaped from that, and slipped over to Mecca, where I—but there is no use in going on any farther. At all events, I have been in every country under the sky, where any thing at all in the shape of a good evening could be come at, yet I am bound to declare, as an honest man and an Irishman, that I would match that Irish evening against any foreign evening in or out of Europe. The sky was one cloudless expanse of blue, from the western rim of which that pleasant fellow, the sun, who was in excellent good humour at the time, shot his rays slantingly, and in a very handsome manner indeed, upon the earth. It was certainly as genteel sunshine as a man could wish, and the whole thing did him infinite credit. It was not, on the other hand, a flaring, vulgar evening. No; there was a freshness and delicacy of light mingling in quiet radiance

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with the still beauty of nature, as it gradually developed itself in buds and blossoms and flowers, under the balmy influence of spring. Like a bottle of champagne, or what is better still, a good tumbler of whiskey punch, it was calculated to make a man's heart rejoice within him. The golden beams, resembling the light of a young beauty's eyes, fell upon the still earth with that trembling lustre to which modesty gives a character at once tender and exquisite. There they lay, earth and sky, like two young fools, silent and blushing, peeping at each other, whilst their hearts gushed with love, both apparently on the eve of a declaration. How still, how beautiful, how soft, how full of pathos to a blue-stocking, was that celebrated evening!

> "The forest seem'd to listen for the rustling of its leaves,
> And the very skies to glisten in the hope of summer eves."

Down to the left, the river ran between two hanging hills, whose sides were covered with furze, now in full flower and fragrance. Up to our right, immediately on the banks of that blessed stream, stood the beautiful and sequestered homestead of Roger M'Faudeen, its white walls shining from among the trees, and its chimney sending up a straight column of blue smoke, undisturbed in its symmetry by a single breath of air. Give me, after all, the sweet, secluded spot of unpretending beauty, which, clothed with the charm of early love, the heart can take in at a glance. Let the eye lose itself upon the awful magnificence of the Alps, and the imagination be stunned by the grandeur of the Pyrenees—let any man who chooses, admire the voluptuous beauty of an Italian landscape, as he would the charms of a lovely woman without modesty—for me, I prefer the soft retreat that lies between the hills, every spot of which is bound to the spirit by some early incident or association,—in the same manner that I would a modest female with whose virtues I am acquainted. There are women, as there are

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landscapes, that do not strike the eye or heart, at a first glance, but who, upon a longer intimacy, gradually disclose virtue after virtue, and charm after charm, until, before we are conscious of it, we find them irrevocably fixed in our affections, and wonder why we did not at first perceive their loveliness. In both cases the object holds its influence with more enduring tenderness over our hearts, and indeed generally lasts until they perish together. How sweet were the glimpses of the river, as it wended through the meadows that lay between the holme whereon we played, and Roger's house! How calmly did it flow between the banks from which the oziers dipped gently into its stream!

"Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!
Ah fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain.
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring."

God bless you, Gray! you are worthy, if only for having written the elegy in a country church-yard, to be called "Twilight Gray," while the world lasts.

As we were engaged at play on the evening I have described, light-hearted and innocent as the lambs about us, each and all intent upon our pastimes, I at once felt such an elevation of soul, such serenity of mind, such a sense of intense happiness, as I have never since, even in a comparatively faint degree, experienced. I thought my physical gravity had been dissolved into nothing, and that I could absolutely tread upon air. Emotions, at first undirected to any object, but balmy, delightful, and ethereal, crowded upon me. I instantly abandoned my position in the game, the range of which I considered to be too limited

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for my powers. I bounded with shoutings of rapture and exultation over the fields, threw myself into a thousand antic attitudes, leaped, caprioled, and gamboled like a young puppy, and, in fact, felt precisely the same class of sensations described by Sir Humphrey Davy, after having inhaled oxalic gas,—ineffable rapture and happiness, together with an inconceivably vivid reproduction in my memory of all the circumstances that had affected me with pleasure during the preceding two or three years. External objects I did not notice, nor had they any influence over me. I was actually inspired; borne away by an afflatus so transporting, that description fails in giving even a feeble notion of it. At length I stood still near my companions, who having observed my countenance to change, instantly surrounded me; but I saw them not. They asked me why I got pale, and why my eyes were fixed. To this I could make no reply; my physical senses had abandoned me; I could neither see, speak, nor hear, for some minutes. Their power, however, seemed to have withdrawn from outward things, only to give a more piercing and intense perception to my imagination, for they evidently merged into it, until it became almost supernatural. In this state I remained for a few minutes, my face pale as ashes, and my eyes wild and fixed, but vague, sharp, and gleaming. A chasm ensued in my recollection, occasioned by my having lapsed into insensibility. On recovering, I found myself exhausted, full of wonder, and quite drenched with perspiration.

"John," said I, to my brother, "come home; our sister Mary is there before us." She was a favourite sister.

"No such thing," he replied, "we did not expect her. Did *you* hear she was to come?"

"No—but I know she is at home. I saw her this moment."

"You saw her! Where?"

I then described to him the vision I had seen during my ecstacy, which was precisely what I now relate. It appeared

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to me that I saw my sister, then only about three months married, coming down the road which led to our house, and what is singular, I felt not surprise at this, although I knew, or ought to have remembered, that the road was invisible from the *holme* where I stood. At first I observed in my mind's eye only a female figure, which presently became more defined in outline as it advanced. The dress, however, was new to me and I did not for a moment suspect it to be my sister. By and bye the features began to develop themselves, until they were impressed clearly upon my vision as hers. Henceforward my eye followed her for about eighty perches—she went down the village street—shook hands with a Mrs. Thomas—gave an apple to a neighbour's child that she met near our door, then entered our house—kissed my mother and youngest sister, who were the only two of the family at home, and having laid aside her cloak and bonnet, she sat at the right-hand side of the hearth.

When I related this to my brother, I asked him to come home, as we had not seen her for a month.

He only laughed at me, however, and declined leaving his play-fellows.

I replied that what I had said was true, that I had seen her, and that I would go home whether he accompanied me or not. On my own mind the impression was so strong as to leave no doubt whatsoever of its truth.

I remember that on separating from my companions, I heard my brother say—"Something ails him; I see it by his wild looks."

The boys assented to this, and one of them called after me to know why I cried, or if any of them had accidentally hurt me; for I should have told the reader, that after having recovered from the state of excitement in which I saw the vision, the tears flowed in torrents from my eyes. 'Tis true they were not accompanied by sorrow, but were evidently produced by

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hysteria, as they came involuntarily, and much to my relief. Altogether I felt, when this singular affection had passed away, that no consideration could induce me to undergo it again. The impression it left behind, notwithstanding the ecstatic transports with which it came upon me, were decidedly painful, if not agonizing. I immediately proceeded home, accompanied by my brother, who, fearing that I was really ill, overtook me. On entering the house, judge of what I must have felt, when I found my sister on the very seat, and in the very dress I beheld in the vision—a dress, too, which I had never seen on her before. I instantly asked her if she had spoken to, and shaken hands with, Mrs. Thomas?—*She had.* Had she given an apple to little James Delany?—*She had.* Every thing, in fact, occurred literally as I had seen it!

Now before I speak to the philosophers about this, let me inform them for their comfort that it is emphatically *no fiction*, that all the circumstances are accurately given, and that I could depose to its truth. I next beg to ask the infidels how they would explain or account for it. Let the scientific men attack it; let the physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, barbers, and resurrectionists, on the one hand, all have at it. Let the fellows of college try it, the doctors and bachelors of divinity, parsons, curates, parish clerks, and sextons, on the other hand, all grapple with it. Any man within the extremities of his profession, from the state physician and surgeon-general, to the aforesaid resurrectionist—any man from a bishop to a grave-digger, who will undertake to solve it by any other theory than second-sight, is welcome to send in his solution before the eighth day of next month, and if it be written in any thing like decent sufferable grammar, and contain one idea not already worn to tatters, I hereby pledge myself that Mr. Poplar will give it insertion.

I now proceed to another circumstance equally authentic, *quorum pars fui.* In the town of C——w, lived a man, whose

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name was F——r, a watchmaker, who, in consequence of having lost his sight, was compelled to retire from business. I had lodged in his house for some months before what I shall relate occurred. His sight did not fail him in early life, so that he was, at the period I speak of, about seventy years of age. One Saturday evening, in the month of June, he and I were sitting in his own garden after the sun had gone down, where he told me that he intended, in a month or so, to go to Dublin, for the purpose of having an operation performed on his eyes. I never saw him in better spirits, and as he dwelt with manifest satisfaction upon the pleasure he contemplated by the restoration of his vision, I ventured to observe, that in case the operation succeeded, he himself would be a living witness of the reality of *second* sight. He smiled benevolently, and replied, that he hoped he would live to settle that difficult question. We then separated, each to his repose. The next morning, about six o'clock, I had just shaved, and was proceeding to wash, when I heard a shriek from F——r's wife, and immediately, in a loud cry, she called upon their daughter. "Your father," said she, "has fainted; come up, for God's sake." I slept on the same floor with this amiable and respectable old couple, so that there was nothing but a lobby between us. On hearing the cry, I hastily wiped my hands and ran to their bed-room. As I entered, the husband, half dressed, was lying on the carpet, his head and shoulders supported by his wife; he gave one deep sigh, then his under-jaw fell, and I saw that all was over.

When the daughter arrived, we attempted to recover him, but in vain; a few minutes convinced us that, whatever medical skill might do, we could do nothing. They then begged me to run up and acquaint his son with what had happened. I did so. Two or three minutes brought me to his house. On rapping at the hall-door, I found by the delay in opening it, that the family had not yet risen. It was then about twenty minutes

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past six, of a Sunday morning. After waiting and rapping three or four times, the servant maid, with a cloak about her shoulders, opened the door without unchaining it, and putting out rather a frost-bitten nose, asked what I wanted. She instantly recognized me, however, and without more ado showed me into the parlour.

"Tell your master," said I, "that I wish to speak to him on the instant."

Ere she had time to reply, her mistress entered the room, exhibiting an unusual degree of agitation.

"Oh, Mr. W——," said she, "he is dead! he is dead!" and she immediately burst into tears.

"Dead!" said I, feigning astonishment—"who is dead?"

"You need not conceal it," she replied, "Mr. F——r is dead!"

"*Which* of them?" I inquired; is it *your* Mr. F——r?"

"No, no," she returned, "but my father-in-law; I know he is dead. It is not fifteen minutes since he was with me."

The husband now entered the parlour, and appeared to labour under amazement, doubt, and apprehension.

"What *is* this?" he inquired; "has any thing happened my father?"

"Your father!" said I; "why what could lead you to suppose such a thing?"

"Mrs. F——r," he replied, "awoke me about fifteen minutes ago, and said that my father was *dead!*"

"Mrs. F——r," said I, "let me know the circumstances?"

She related them precisely as follows:—

"It is now," she continued, "about fifteen or twenty minutes since my father-in-law came to the bed-side to me, and putting his hand upon my forehead, pressed it, until I awoke. On looking up, I saw him standing over me, with a countenance rather in sorrow and affection than otherwise. Before I had time to speak to him, he said, in a solemn voice:—

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"'Margaret, tell Joe to get up and go down to his mother. She and Margaret (this was his own daughter) have none to take care of them *now;* they are alone.' Having said this," she continued, "he stooped down and kissed me, adding—'God bless you, my dear, you were ever kind to me.' I could not understand such a scene," said the daughter-in-law; "it was so odd and strange. I looked up with an intention of asking what he meant, but I discovered that it was only *then* that I had awoke, and on opening my eyes, and rubbing them, I found that he was gone. I awoke my husband immediately, and in truth we were actually discussing this extraordinary circumstance when your knock alarmed us. I felt that it was a message to inform us of his death. Now, tell us truly is he dead?"

"It is very strange," said I; "but I fear he is dead. Let us, however, get medical aid immediately."

"Yes," she replied, bursting again into tears, "he *is* dead!"

We procured medical assistance, but her dream was verified; he had gone to his rest. Now, I was an actor in this melancholy drama, myself, and I protest as solemnly as man can protest, that it is a truth, without one atom of exaggeration.

Come on, ye Saddusaical rogues! here I take my stand. Resolve me this, if you are able; but I know you are not able, ye miserable creatures. I defy you in squadrons, and with my single arm I will undertake to crush you in platoons. No; I eat my words. I will be assisted by a splendid array of genius. I range myself with Greece and Rome—with Herodotus and Livy; and if that does not satisfy you, then you must face the oriental Mollahs and Brahmins. But that is not all; here come Albertus Magnus, Cardan, Paracelsus, Franciscus Picus Mirandola, Olaus Magnus, and Pontopopidan. Tremble again. Here come Bodinus, Debrio, Remigius, Gaffarel, De Loger, De Lanore. Then come Luther, Melancthon, Camerarius, Perkins, Mathers, Glanville, Scott, Hopkins, Baxter, and Henry More

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the Platonist. Are you satisfied? No. I annihilate you by the names of Dr. Sam Johnson, John Wesley, and Adam Clarke; but there is no use in exhausting my learning upon you. I might quote Cornelius Agrippa, Mestinel, Delacampus, Julianus, Delampus, Melanthusus, Prisculus, Trobantus, Mellagrinus, and a whole host of others, every man of whom could not only beat you on the supernatural, but show you, that on any other subject connected with extensive learning, ye are little less than the very title pages of reading—so far at least as honest and substantial spirits are concerned.

I next proceed to my second and concluding history of authentic apparitions, for I do not look upon the case of my own seer-ship as one that comes under the character of a ghost story. In a certain part, then, of Ireland, which, for good reasons, I shall not mention, lived a man named Walker. As a farmer, his circumstances in life were respectable, as were his connexions, his character, and education. He was one of those silent men who pass through the world blameless, and without offence. His disposition was mild, but marked by a firmness of character amounting occasionally to inflexibility. To unimpeachable honesty he united a stern placidity of manner, that caused him to be respected almost at a first glance; and although peaceable, he possessed courage, both moral and physical, in a high degree. One observation more is essential to the completion of his outline; he looked upon all accounts of apparitions and supernatural appearances with the most profound contempt; but he lived to change his opinions. Such a person, in consequence of his integrity and intelligence, is always useful at assizes, as a juror. In fact, ever since the thirtieth year of his age, he had served in that capacity, with the reputation of being a shrewd, honest, and humane man, who permitted nothing to sway him from the direct line of his duty. In a word, he was respected and esteemed by all classes.

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Walker had been about five years a juror, when a very delicate and distressing case of infanticide came on at the M— assizes. The persons charged with the crime were two females of rather respectable station in society. They were sisters; one of them principal, the other her accomplice. The trial, which excited deep interest, lasted a whole day. Walker was foreman, and displayed during its progress much discrimination and knowledge of character. The elder sister, who was the mother and murderess of the child, paid the heavy penalty of her crime; but the younger, though she received the same sentence, did not share the same fate. There were strong circumstances of mitigation in her case, for her guilt arose principally from the affection she bore to her unhappy sister, and the sway the other had over her. She was young, beautiful, innocent, and, from the impulse of her own heart, utterly incapable of lending herself to the perpetration of such a crime. The jury, of whom, as I said, Walker was foreman, strongly, and with tears in their eyes, recommended her to mercy. The judge said he would back the recommendation with all his influence, but that he must, in the meantime, pass the sentence of the law upon both. Never, probably, was a scene so afflicting witnessed in a court of justice. Every face was convulsed, and every check drenched with tears. The judge was compelled to pause several times while he addressed them, and on coming to the specific terms of their sentence, his voice utterly failed him. When it was pronounced, among the sobs and groans of a weeping court, the younger folded her sister in an agonizing embrace: "Emily," she exclaimed, "I will die with you."

"No," replied her sister with calmness, "the innocent must not suffer with the guilty. My Lord, take compassion on her youth and inexperience. She is guilty of no crime, but too much affection for a sister who did not deserve it."

Walker, the next day, accompanied by the friends of these unhappy females, set out for Dublin to lay the case of the

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younger sister before the Lord Lieutenant. Their relations pressed him, as foreman of the jury, to plead for both; but this, with probably too strict a sense of justice, he absolutely declined to do. "Where there is guilt so enormous," he replied, "there ought to be adequate punishment." He had little difficulty in procuring a pardon for Lucy.

In due time Emily was executed; but Lucy's heart was broken by the ignominious death and shame of her beloved but criminal sister. She fell into decline, and ere the expiration of a year, she withered away like an early flower. Her beauty, and her sorrows, and her shame, passed from the earth, and were seen no more.

Fifteen years elapsed after the mournful fate of these beautiful but unfortunate sisters; their brief and painful history was now forgotten, or only remembered with that callous indifference which time gives to our recollections of guilt and suffering. Walker maintained the same excellent and respectable character with which he had set out in life. By industry and skill he had become wealthy. Some property, to which he was entitled by the death of a relation, had, however, led him into the mazes of litigation, and he found it necessary to make a journey to Dublin. About six miles from his house passed the Grand Canal, by which, for convenience sake, he determined to travel. He knew the hour when it was to pass the next station-house, and went to bed, resolved to be up in time to meet it. On awaking, he feared that he had overslept himself, as he concluded from the light that glinted in through the shutters of his bed-room window. In a few minutes he was dressed, and as he had sent his luggage to the station-house on the preceding day, he walked briskly forward with a good staff in his hand. It appeared in a short time, that he had anticipated the progress of the night, and that what he supposed to be the dawn of day, was only the light of the moon. The mistake, however, being on the safe side, he felt no

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anxiety, but proceeded leisurely along, uninfluenced by apprehension, and least of all by the dread of any thing supernatural.

The night was calm and frosty; the moon, though rather on the wane, shone with peculiar lustre, and shot down her silvery light upon the sleeping earth, which now lay veiled in her dim, cold radiance, like a dead beauty in her virgin shroud. The whole starry host glowed afar in the blue concave of heaven, the arch of which presented not a single cloud. Over to his left rose the grey smokeless towers of B——, surrounded by its noble beeches, whose branches, glistening feebly in the distance, reposed in utter stillness. The lonely beauty of the hour lay on every object about him. The fields, as he crossed them, were crisp under his feet; the faint sparkles on the grass shone like new silver, and the voice of the streams and rivulets, as they murmured under the already formed ice, borrowed sweetness from the solitude and silence. On arriving near the ruined Abbey of H——, he could not help pausing to look at it. There it stood, mantled by the wing of old romance, its mullioned windows shorn of the oriel tint of past magnificence, its tracery partially defaced, and its architraves broken or overrun with ivy, that melancholy plant of ruin. What a finely tempered mass of light and shade did it present! How admirably contrasted was the wing of its gloomy aisle, reposing in the deep shadow, with the southern window, through which streamed a gush of clear and lonely light! There, too, were the old ancestral tombs, glittering in the grey churchyard, monuments at least of pardonable vanity, beneath which the haughty noble dissolves as fast into dust as the humble peasant who sleeps in the lowly grave beside him. There certainly is something grand and solemn in the memory of feudal times, when the pomp of the hall was rude but lordly, and the imposing splendour of religion swept before the imagination in the gorgeous array of temporal pride. Walker could not help standing to contemplate the monumental effigies where husband

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and wife appeared to sleep before him on the old grey slab, like persons bound by enchantment—

> "Outstretch'd together were express'd
> He and my ladye fair,
> With hands uplifted on the breast
> In attitude of prayer;
> Long visag'd, clad in armour, he;
> With ruffled arms and boddice, she."

Perhaps there is nothing on which the eye can rest, that fills us with so solemn an impression of the vanity of life, as these rude figures of lord and dame, that lie on our old tomb-stones. I do not mean to say, however, that they represent the shadowy side of existence only. On the contrary, they touch our spirits with sweetness even on the brink of the grave. Who can look on the husband and wife, stretched out in the decent composure of christian hope, their hands clasped in affection, or raised in prayer, without feeling a crowd of sensations that knit him to his kind? Imagination, too, wings her way back into the gloom of centuries; re-animates the time-worn effigies that lie before us; hovers in the dream of a moment over the chequered path of their existence; witnesses their loves and sorrows; sees them pace with stately tread upon the terrace of their baronial castle, or attended by their sons and daughters, sweeping proudly along their halls and galleries. On, on, they go, through all the stages of being, engaged in the bustle of existence, until age and decay lay their bodies side by side in their ancestral vault, and filial affection places their rude effigies upon the slab that covers them. For my part, I think that all these fine old feudal conceptions are not only full of nature and feeling, but actually constitute the very romance of death.

Having once more looked upon the dark ivy-covered porches and shafted windows, and probably thought of the times when mitred abbot, and priest, and monk, filled its now solitary and

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deserted walls with those pageantries which fascinate the imagination whilst they encumber religion, he passed on, and in a few minutes came out on the public road, which in this place ran parallel with the canal, until it entered the village where he intended to meet the packet. Finding himself on the hard level way, he advanced at a tolerable pace, not a sound falling on his ear, except that of his own steps, nor any thing possessing motion visible, except the rapid train of a meteor as it shot in a line along the sky. When within about a mile and a half of the station-house, he began to calculate the exact progress of the night, and to consider whether it might not be nearer the packet hour than he imagined. At this moment a circumstance occurred which led him to conclude that the approach of morning could not be far distant:—this was the appearance of two shadows of females, which, although they followed him at a short distance, yet from the position of the moon, necessarily extended in a slanting manner past him, just as his own moved rather in front of himself, but sloping a little to the left.

"I perceive," said he, "that it cannot be far from the hour, for here are others on their way to the station-house as well as myself."

Good manners prevented him from looking back, especially as those who followed him were women, who probably might prefer avoiding a solitary stranger under such circumstances. He, accordingly, went on at a quicker step, but felt some surprise on seeing, by their motion, that *their* step quickened in proportion to his. He then slackened his pace: perhaps, thought he, they are anxious to have my company and protection into the village. This, however, could not have been their motive, for they also slackened their pace.

"How is this?" said he: "I can hear my own tread, but I cannot hear theirs." He then stood, with an intention of accosting them when they should come up. They also stood,

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and exhibited a stillness of attitude resembling rather the fixed shadow of statues than of human beings. Walker now turned round to observe them more closely, but his astonishment may be easily conceived, when he found no person of either sex near him, or within sight of him. The circumstance startled him, but nevertheless he felt little, if any thing, of what could be termed fear.

"This is strange," said he; "want of sleep must have dimmed my eyes, or clouded my brain. Perhaps it was my own shadow I have been looking at all this time." A single glance soon convinced him of his error. There projected his, and there appeared the other two, distinct from it, just as plain as before. He turned again, and traced both the figures up to a particular spot on the road; but substance, most certainly there was none visible. He rubbed his eyes, and examined the place about him with a scrutiny that convinced him there was not a living person present, from whom the shadows could proceed. The road, before and behind him for a considerable distance, was without shrub, hedge, or ditch. Nothing, in short, could be concealed from his observation.

Fear now came upon him; his hair stood, and his limbs shook. "God protect me," said he, "this is nothing natural. I will proceed to the station-house as fast as I can."

On resuming his journey at a rapid walk, he observed that his shadowy companions were determined not to lose him. Hitherto they had kept at the same distance from him, quickening or slackening their pace according as he himself did; but now he saw that they approached him more nearly than before. His fear was then terrible, though far from being at its height, for, as he kept his eye upon them, he perceived the taller and more robust of the two using angry gestures that betokened an intention to injure him. The slender shadow, on the other hand, pushed her back, and attempted by interposing to divert her from her purpose. Walker stood; his strength was gone;

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to proceed was therefore impossible. A struggle that was enough to turn his heart into jelly, took place between them. The fury of the more robust appeared to be boundless; gleamy fire, barely perceptible, flashed from her eyes, and her breath, he thought, passed from her mouth like something between flame and smoke. The persons and features of both assumed a very remarkable distinctness; and by a flash of recollection he recognized their colourless features, although he could not tell how, as those of the unfortunate but beautiful sisters whose unhappy history the reader has perused. No human passion—no instance of mortal resentment, could parallel the rage and thirst of vengeance that appeared to burn in the breast of the elder sister; nor could any thing human, on the other hand, approach in beauty the calm, but melancholy energy, with which the younger attempted to protect the man who was the object of her sister's hate. The struggles of the one were fearful, intense, and satanic; those of the other firm, soothing, and sorrowful. The malignant shadow frequently twisted the latter about like a slender willow, and after having removed her from between herself and the object of her revenge, rushed towards him, as if she possessed the strength of a tempest; but before she could reach his person, there was the benign being again, calmly and meekly before her. For twenty minutes this supernatural contest lasted, during which Walker observed that the distance between himself and them was becoming gradually shorter. Nevertheless, he could not stir, no more than if he been rooted into the earth.

It was now, that, for the first time, he felt as if he were actually withered by a shriek of rage and disappointment that burst from the shadow of the murderess. She stood still, as if rendered for a moment impotent by the terrific force of her own resentment; and while standing, her hands clenched, and her arms raised, she poured forth shriek after shriek, so wild and keen, that the waters of the canal curled beneath the thin

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ice, by their power. These shrieks were rendered, if possible, more horrible by the echoes which gave them back as thickly as she uttered them, with that exaggerating character, too, which softens sweet sounds, and deepens those which are unpleasant. It appeared to Walker, as if there had been at that minute the shadow of the murderess shrieking on every hill and in every valley about him.

While the elder was thus fixed by her own fury, the younger knelt down, and, looking at Walker, pointed to the sky. He considered this as an injunction to pray, and in compliance with it, he dropped on his knees, and besought the protection of God in silence, for his tongue was powerless. From this forward the strength of the murderess seemed to decline, her exertions to injure him grew still more feeble, till at length they altogether ceased. The gracious form, however, even then stood between her and him. The rage of the other appeared to have taken the character of anguish, for with a look that indicated torture, she gazed on him, placed her hand on her heart, and exclaimed:

"I burn, I burn!"

Having uttered these words, she melted from his sight, but although he could not any longer see her airy outlines, he could hear a melancholy wail streaming across the fields, and becoming fainter and fainter, until it mingled with, and was lost, in silence.

The benign being then looked upon him with an expression so mild and happy, that he felt both his strength and confidence return. She pointed again towards heaven, and said:—

"Be merciful. There was pardon on earth for my sister, but you refused to seek it in her behalf. She died without repentance, for she despaired. *Time* would have brought her repentance, and hope would have brought her to God. Be merciful."

Walker could not reply, and on looking about him, he found

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she had disappeared, and that he was alone. With feeble steps and a beating heart he proceeded towards the station-house, entertaining rather strong suspicions that he was scarcely safe even with his own shadow. On his arrival, the first thing he called for was a tumbler of punch, which he swallowed at a draught; after this he got another, which went the way of the first; but it was not until he had despatched a third, that he felt himself able to account for the terror which was expressed on his countenance. Even then, he only admitted that he had been attacked on the way by two women, one of whom he said was very near handling him roughly. Now, as Walker's courage was known, this version did not gain credit, and accordingly an authentic account of the whole affair appeared in the next provincial journal to the following effect:—

"On Thursday *night* last, about the hour of four o'clock in the *morning*, as Mr. Walker of——was proceeding on his way to meet the canal packet, he was attacked by two fellows dressed in female apparel, who robbed, stripped, and then threw him, after a sound threshing, into the canal, from which he got out only because he was an expert swimmer. They left him, it is true, an old frieze jock, and a pair of indifferent trowsers, dressed in which he reached the station-house in a very draggled, disconsolate, and ludicrous condition. The police, we are happy to say, have a sharp look out for these viragos."

Now, Sadducees, perhaps you will not believe this story. If you don't, I can tell you there is one who does, and that is myself. I had it from Walker's son, who is a good Methodist, and when a Methodist tells a ghost story, I don't know by what logic a man can refuse to believe him. The man is always sincere on such occasions, and sincerity is a virtue which we ought all to encourage.

THE END.

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ERRATUM.

Page 101, second line from bottom, *for* " and " *read* " he".

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